

Niagara Prospects

by

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A thesis
presented to the University of Waterloo
in fulfilment of the
thesis requirement for the degree of
Master of Architecture

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2009
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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

ABSTRACT

This thesis proposes a fresh engagement with the idea of the archaic as a means to recover and replenish some of the lost vitality suffered during what William Barrett characterized the modern period as "the gigantic externalization of life." An introductory essay examines how the related ideas of the archaic, the primal, and the prehistoric have at key moments provided a source of creative energy for the arts of the last century. Collections of found material, and several photographic studies document the city of Niagara Falls—icon of American pop culture and faded relic of romanticism. The photographs present an alternative to the world of the touristic snapshot, and address the questions: In the age of simulation how do we know what is real anymore? Can we learn to see with archaic eyes?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Advisory Committee:

Philip Beesley (s), Rick Andrighetti, Anne Bordeleau

External Reader:

Gary Michael Dault

Also:

Marika Kozachenko, Niagara Parks Commission

Bob McNair

Somehow the usual “hierarchy of gratitude” doesn’t quite suite this occasion for recognizing so much patient support and encouragement.

To *ALL* – colleagues, friends and family,

Warm, an embracing thanks.

- JW

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ABBREVIATIONS:

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AWAKENING THE ARCHAIC

Niagara Falls is far more than a natural phenomenon. A world-class destination with something for everyone, the city offers thriving night life, one-of-a-kind sightseeing, and adventure for all ages. The Niagara Falls honeymoon and family activities like the Maid of the Mist tour and Marineland are long-time traditions, while new Niagara attractions abound.

The popular Fallsview Casino has made Niagara Falls a must-visit Canadian destination, and an array of Niagara accommodations –from charming to luxe–offer visitors an ideal retreat. A growing gourmet food and wine scene, drawing upon nearby Niagara-on-the-Lake vineyards, offers everything from out-of-the-way restaurant gems to popular Fallsview dining. Come see what makes Niagara Falls one of the world’s favorite destinations! ¹

1. Welcome message on the Official Niagara Falls Tourism website.
(May 2009)

Between the Lake Ontario and Erie, there is a vast and prodigious Cadence of Water which falls down after a surprising and astonishing manner, insomuch that the Universe does not afford its Parallel.

From the great Fall unto this Rock, which is to the West of the River, the two Brinks of it are so prodigious high, that it would make one tremble to look steadily upon the Water, rolling along with a Rapidity not to be imagin’d. ²

2. Louis Hennepin. *A New Discovery of a Large Country in America* (1675).

I. ARTIFICIAL PARADISE

Icon of the American Sublime, prodigy of nature, natural wonder of the world, divine handiwork, emblem of the New World. Whatever special label it has worn, Niagara Falls has always projected an image of a place at once extraordinary, sublime, and mythical in its powers to evoke both passion and awe. The popularity of this image, which has its roots in Romanticism, is made apparent upon reviewing the rows upon rows of free brochures available in any hotel lobby, or when visiting one of the many websites geared to tourism. The famous cataract, a frothing curtain of Niagara River water that plunges down fifty metres in a northward flow to Lake Ontario while sending up a cumulus of white mist (with bonus rainbow on sunny days), is the region's claim to international fame, its bread and butter, and its greatest cliché. As the preeminent tourist site in North America since the early nineteenth century, it is also quite possibly the most photographed place on earth.



Fig.1 Aerial view of present day Niagara Falls.

In 2007 and 2008, I made several trips to Niagara Falls (Fig.1). Despite the promise of having a unique encounter with a wonder of nature, there were numerous detours and obstacles along the way before arriving at the falls itself, each of them conspiring for your time, attention and, more often than not, your wallet. Approaching from the southwest, there's the War of 1812 battle ground of Lundy's Lane, today a flat stretch of road lined with cheap motels, gentlemen's clubs, strip malls, factory outlet stores, chain restaurants, and gas stations; Turning right at the end of Lundy's Lane is Clifton Hill, the self-monikered "Street of Fun," where every camera-toting tourist is funneled down a snaking street of commercial tack—home to wax museums, haunted houses, ice cream shops, souvenir booths, a video arcade, dinosaur themed minigolf, franchise hotels, and various midway-type rides. After exiting the noisy, neon kitsch at the bottom, in stark contrast, one enters the manicured lawns and rustic canopies of Queen Victoria Park, a green buffer zone created to keep the silliness of Clifton Hill at a merciful remove from the majestic falls. Seemingly at odds with the natural phenomenon of the waterfall, these three different landscapes—to which could also be added the hotels and casino tower that rise up from the bluff, the enormous hydroelectric works along the river, and the plants and factories built during the city's development as an industrial centre—juxtaposed onto one setting prompts one to ask: how exactly is one suppose to respond to the falls today?



Fig.2 Engraving of Niagara Falls in Louis Hennepin's book.

The Jesuit Friar, Louis Hennepin, who was amongst the first explorers to record his encounter with the falls, recalled himself trembling in a near state of spiritual rapture (Fig.2). To be sure, his description of the physical site was marked by exaggeration and literary flourishes, meant to stimulate a readership fascinated by the exotic landscape of the New World. Hennepin's penchant for hyperbole nonetheless coloured a romantic image of Niagara Falls which has endured. In light of this romantic version, but puzzled by the incommensurable landscapes that established themselves in its proximity, I wondered whether there was such a thing as a *pure* experience of the falls. Behind all of the designed fakery, the picture postcard imagery, the countless spectacles concocted to titillate waves of tourists, was there another side to this *artificial paradise* concealed from normal view? Hidden layers beneath the garish mask? In a present that has arguably forfeited 'authentic' immediate reality (if indeed it ever existed) for its souvenir replica—the *Age of the Simulacrum* as Jean Baudrillard terms it—I wanted to try to disclose something of that absent Niagara, to see if one could have an honest encounter with this place, free from (or at least less burdened by) preconceptions. While leafing through in a pile of slickly produced brochures collected over my several trips there, a line at the bottom of one entreats: **DON'T FORGET YOUR CAMERA.**

2. IMAGE WORLD

In his "Art Work" essay of 1936, Walter Benjamin uses the term aura to signify the unique qualities of a work of art that elicit feelings of reverence and awe. Under the sway of new technology, however, the traditional *cult value* of art was being overturned by *exhibition value*, enabled by the mechanical reproduction techniques of film and photography. The entry of these two forms effectively liquidated art's aura and claim to authenticity, while at the same time ushering in a new kind of attention conforming to mass society. "For the first time in world history," Benjamin wrote, "mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual."¹ Half a century later, and less sanguine about the spread of photography's influence, Roland Barthes commented: "We live according to a generalized image-repertoire. Consider the United States, where everything is transformed into images: only images exist and are produced and are consumed."² The cultural critic Susan Sontag echoes a similar glumness when she decried the ubiquity of the mass-produced image "the most irresistible form of mental pollution."³ We note here diverging views: To Benjamin, photography's reproducibility was a potentially revolutionary political force in his time, while to Barthes and Sontag, both writing in the postmodern era, its pervasiveness in the urban environment was the epitome of capitalist commodity culture—a world drunk on visual media. One detects a yearning after the authentic, even a wish to revive art's former stake in originality.⁴ Says Sontag in her essay "The Image-World:" "To possess the world in the form of images is, precisely, to reexperience the unreality and remoteness of the real."⁵

The present article is a response to the common grievance over the loss of 'real' and unmediated experience.⁶ At the same time, it is conceded that the extension of simulated reality into everyday life, exemplified by such places as Las Vegas, Los Angeles and Niagara Falls, is an intractable part of our current modernity. The work therefore addresses the apparent disjunction between the desire for authenticity and a culture that now prefers the *absolute fake*. How can the gap between reality and appearance, original and copy be reconciled? To start with, a suggestion: If, as Benjamin asserts, mechanical reproduction eroded the historical aura of art, can the same means be used construct a new one? Can we entertain the notion of a second-nature aura to replace the original—a *simulacral aura*?⁷ Can photography be used as an agent of recuperation and resuscitation?

3. THE ARCHAIC

A distinguishing mark of twentieth-century art, contends American essayist Guy Davenport (1927-2005), is the "passion for the archaic." He claims that it was symptomatic of "a longing for something lost, for energies, values, and certainties unwisely abandoned by an industrial age."⁸ Although the passion had waned by the start of the Second World War, this thesis follows in its wake and draws inspiration from the *archaic* as a key concept. Insofar as the idea of the archaic provides a replenishing counterforce in the face of the postmodern crisis of reality, this work can be thought of as a project of recovery—for lost vitality, immediacy, and presence. If we are to succeed, a consideration of art's origins in prehistory, in humanity's archaic past, will be of first importance.⁹ Are we, I wonder, due for a reawakening of the archaic? Can we conceive of a *contemporary archaic*?

1. Benjamin. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," II, IV.

2. Barthes. *Camera Lucida*. 118.

3. Sontag. "In Plato's Cave," *On Photography*. 24.

4. Barthes. *Camera Lucida*. 118-119. "What characterizes the so-called advanced societies is that they today consume images and no longer, ... beliefs; they are therefore more liberal...but also more 'false' (less 'authentic')." "

5. Sontag. "The Image-World," *On Photography*. 167.

6. Sontag. "Against Interpretation," *Against Interpretations and Other Essays*. 7. "The world, our world, is depleted, impoverished enough. Away with all duplicates of it, until we again experience more immediately what we have."

7. Hal Foster. "Archives of Modern Art," *October* 99 (Winter 2002): 91. Foster notes that Andre Malraux foresaw the possibility for mechanical reproduction to 'construct' aura.

8. Davenport. "The Symbol of the Archaic," *The Geography of the Imagination*. 24.

9. "arch-," the latin root meaning chief, primary or first, from which are derived archive, architecture, and archetype.

4. LASCAUX

1. Friedrich Nietzsche. "Skirmishes of an Untimely Man," *The Twilight of the Idols*. 539.

2. Davenport. "The Symbol of the Archaic," *The Geography of the Imagination*. 19.

3. Ibid.

4. See also Daniel Boorstin's *The Creators*. 148-153.

5. Bataille. *Lascaux or the Birth of Art*. 34.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid. Susan Sontag agrees with this theory: "The earliest experience of art must have been that it was incantatory, magical; art was an instrument of ritual." Sontag. *Against Interpretation*. 3.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Nietzsche argued that the estrangement from our primitive, instinctual nature has resulted in an ostensible depletion of vitality in modern life.¹ This imbalance is reasserted by Davenport when he says that "we are alienated from all that was most familiar."² In becoming more civilized we have forgotten the restorative powers of Dionysus and abandoned the wisdom of the ancient past in favour of a "tawdry and impious present."³

However limited our knowledge of the lives of our earliest ancestors, we still sense that they experienced the world with a vividness and spiritual depth more acutely than ourselves. When drawings, paintings and etchings were discovered perfectly preserved on the walls of underground caves in southern France and northern Spain, the modern world had for the first time undeniable proof that the hunter-gatherers of the Upper Paleolithic period, fifteen millennia ago, were possessed of an inner life of astonishing wealth.⁴ (Fig.3 and 4)

In his book *Lascaux or the Birth of Art*, Georges Bataille suggests that the paintings and etchings discovered in these caves signal a turning point in the evolution of the human species: from the making of simple tools by *Homo faber*, to the making of "art" by *Homo sapiens*.⁵ What was it, he asked, that caused the shift in consciousness in ancient man? What impulse impelled him to repeatedly paint moving animals on the calcite covered walls, an activity seemingly without a useful end? It was, speculated Bataille, in the spirit of *creative play* that the first art was made, along with the knowledge of *laughter* that separated him from his tool-making predecessors. The paintings "...imply what has always been art's purpose: to create a sensible reality whereby the ordinary world is modified in response to the desire for the extraordinary, for the marvelous, a desire implicit in the human being's very essence."⁶

These cave paintings were created in opposition to the world of *work* and *utility*, Bataille argued, a world which ever since has stultified the imaginative life of civilized man. For the sense of kinship we feel towards prehistoric art arises out of the fact they were, before anything else, instruments of magic. They are poignant reminders of the basic human need to "strive after the impossible."⁷ Furthermore, they testify against old stereotypes which held that prehistoric humans lived in perpetual fear, hunger and misery. On the contrary, we read in these animated depictions of



Fig.3 "First Bull, Red Horse, and Brown Horses," Lascaux Cave, France.



Fig.4
"The Great Hall of the Bulls"
Lascaux Cave, France.

ancient deer, wild horses, cows, bulls and bison, a self-assurance that could only have been the produced by a life that knew of joy.⁸ "We often belittle, call childish this need to be wonderstruck," says Bataille. "...but we set right off again in search of the wonderful. That which we hold worthy of our love is always that which overwhelms us: it is the unhoped-for, the thing that is beyond hoping for. It is as though, paradoxically, our essential self clung to the nostalgia of attaining what our reasoning self had judged unattainable, impossible."⁹

Taking up the idea of the archaic, as artists had done in the early twentieth century, might provide a basis for renewing the dynamism and primitive (dionysian) spirit called on by Nietzsche and other modern thinkers. I'll propose a term here, which will express the natural creative impulse we identify in the art of Prehistoric man. Let it be called the *archaic imagination*. The *archaic imagination* connotes a general attitude, as well as a potential model for artistic activity inspired by the regenerative nature of the earliest works of "art": A way of seeing. The adoption of the word *archaic*, I should add, is mainly for its poetic and associative power than for any specific definition given by the human sciences. As I'll try to elaborate, the *archaic imagination* is linked to four theoretical discourses related to certain inborn faculties of nonrational origins; namely, the intuition and instincts, the phenomenon of the sublime, the theory of empathy, and the psychology of play.

8. Bataille. *Lascaux or the Birth of Art*. 23-24.

9. Ibid., 15. Walter Benjamin also said: "[T]he work of art in prehistoric times...was, first and foremost, an instrument of magic." "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," III.



Fig.5 (LEFT)
"Chagall Horses," Chauvet Cave,
France. Discovered in 1994.

Fig.6
Marc Chagall
I and the Village, 1911
Oil on canvas
192.1 x 151.4 cm
The Museum of Modern Art, New York

5. MODERN EYES, PREHISTORIC EYES

1. Sontag. *Against Interpretation*. 9. See also "In Plato's Cave" where she writes: "Everything exists to end up as a photograph." *On Photography*. 24.

2. Nietzsche. *The Birth of Tragedy*.

3. Charles Baudelaire. "On the Heroism of Modern Life", 304. Had he lived to see the work of photographer Eugène Atget one wonders if he might have changed his mind.

5. Hulme. "Bergson's Theory of Art," *Speculations*. 159.

6. *Ibid.*, 159.

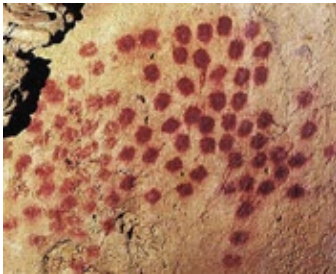


Fig.7 Palm print "pointillist" painting, Chauvet Cave, France.

7. Koestler. *The Act of Creation*. 377, 380. "The ordinary mortal thinks most of the time in clichés. ...His visual schemata are prefabricated for him."

8. *Ibid.*, 380.

9. The romantic poet Shelley (1792–1822) famously said in his essay "A Defence of Poetry" that the poet's purpose was to "strip the veil of familiarity from the world."

10. quoted in Richard Prince. "Ed Ruscha: the original master of California cool has never been hotter, Interview with Richard Prince". (July 2005)

11. Davenport. "Prehistoric Eyes," *The Geography of the Imagination*. 61–67.

Extending earlier points made regarding the image-world, a corresponding problem is the impoverishment of the senses. "Ours is a culture based on excess, on overproduction," writes Sontag in "Against Interpretation." "[T]he result is a steady loss of sharpness in our sensory experience."¹ Causes of this withering of sensitivity has been well speculated, but suspects vary widely: consumer culture, standardization, the decay of aura, Platonism, kitsch, mediocrity, etc. As Nietzsche asserted long before, modern reality is merely a construction of Apollonian appearances.²

A century before Sontag's critique of postmodernism, Baudelaire recorded an uncanny premonition in the streets of Paris: "The life of our city is rich in poetic and marvelous subjects. We are enveloped and steeped as though in an atmosphere of the marvelous; but we do not notice it."³ To him, the rise of photography was the main culprit. (The enemy, he declared in his Salon in 1859, was Louis Daguerre, inventor of the Daguerreotype). A chorus of voices from Benjamin to Baudelaire, to Sontag and Barthes, thus records a shift within modern perception.

The gist of it is, I think, we tend not to see the actual thing but a mold; not the object as such but an abstraction. The British imagist poet T.E. Hulme wrote that we ordinarily see in "stock types."⁵ A consequence of Enlightenment rationalism, our senses perceive a mental projection of a Platonic form instead of the thing-in-itself. Artists, however, as Hulme contends, are able to break through conventional structures of thought to see the reality below the surface.⁶ Arthur Koestler draws a similar conclusion when he claims that normal perception is governed by the cliché.⁷ The artist, he states, is someone who "creates a new personal idiom—an individual code which deviates from conventional rules."⁸ The role of the artist then is to transgress the crystalline plane of intellectual abstraction and bring into being a fresh vision, divested of preconceptions.⁹ The inheritance of prehistoric art at sites such as Lascaux, Altamira, and Chauvet exemplifies the innate human capacity to create new forms *sui generis*. In their own way Modern artists sought to achieve a kind of purity of expression which they recognized was the natural station of the primitive cave painter—an ideal way of looking at the world.

In our time, the American artist Edward Ruscha has said that he wants to "look at" things rather than to "look through" them, as we typically do.¹⁰ The startling vision that decorates the walls at Lascaux, I think, may be closer to us than might be assumed. Ruscha, I dare suggest here, is one contemporary artist whose wry and ironic take on popular culture demonstrates a kindred sensitivity to his environment, the city of Los Angeles (Fig.23 to 27). And while the prehistoric artist did not suffer any 'crises of representation,' he too experimented with different visual modes (Fig.7). He transmitted an expression that was unhindered by conventionalized notions of beauty, taste, or good judgement. The title of one of Davenport's essays neatly sums up the problem: In an increasingly mediated world can we learn to see with *prehistoric eyes*?¹¹ (Fig.5 and 6)

6. THE SUBLIME

"We moderns, we half-barbarians. We are in the midst of our bliss only when we are most in danger. The only stimulus that tickles us is the infinite, the immeasurable."¹ – Nietzsche

To delineate the borders of the *archaic imagination* mentioned earlier in this article, we look to the concept of the sublime, which dominated eighteenth and early nineteenth-century aesthetics. Its development in the romantic period might be regarded as the attempt to reintegrate the primal, irrational side of human experience in the face of the perceived dehumanizing effects of industrialization. Rejecting the hegemony of classical academic tradition, romantic poets and painters sought to 're-enchant' the world by shifting emphasis onto subjectivity, perception, and by searching after new forms and motifs by observing nature.

As an essentially aesthetic phenomenon, the sublime is associated with the curious mixture of pain and pleasure aroused by the encounter with some terrifying force, usually in nature, which threatens to overwhelm the subject.² (Fig.10) According to Edmund Burke's canonic account, the astonishment which the sublime provokes is rooted in such qualities as *infinity*, *immensity*, *magnificence*, *power*, and *obscurity*.³ Examples of nature's sublimity, he argues, include thunderstorms, oceans, mountains, and deep chasms—all of which express the fundamental otherness of nature.

The oeuvre of the landscape painter Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840), who drew on the discourse of the sublime, attempted to come to terms with this idea of the non-human, the wholly other. In *Monk by the Sea* (Fig.8) he painted an immersive spatial illusion which invited the viewer to imagine himself in the monk's solitary pose, standing in rapt silence against an expansive horizon. Rendering the sky and sea as a continuum of cool grays and blues, Friedrich creates an atmosphere of cosmic mystery, the pictorial equivalent of eternity; not an actual place per se but nearer a state of mind. The canvas's large size pulls in the viewer, engendering a mood of contemplation while instilling a sense of the subject's insignificance in the awful immensity of the universe.⁴ The black-cloaked monk of Friedrich's seascape confronts what Wallace Stevens called "the dumbfounding abyss,"⁵ that is, the nothingness that exists in the gap between the subject and object, the ego and the cosmos, which was at last a main preoccupation of the romantic artists.

A further development in the sublime occurred after its transplantation to the New World. In the gigantic uncultivated landscape of North America, the Hudson River School of painters discovered all new sources of imagery with which to expand the aesthetics of the sublime: In the place of Friedrich's mystical, forlorn landscapes, the rugged geography of an untamed Arcadia that seemed everywhere to speak of Divine presence.⁶ American landscape painter Frederic Edwin Church's



1. quoted in Marshall Berman. *All That is Solid Melts into Air*. 23.

2. English critic John Dennis, while crossing the Alps in the 17th century recorded his response to extreme nature as "delightful horror, a terrible joy" an oxymoron which characterized later elaborations on the sublime. (*Miscellanies*, 1693)

3. Burke. *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757). "The passion caused by the great and sublime in nature . . . is Astonishment; and astonishment is that state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror. In this case the mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other." Burke. *On the Sublime*, ed. J. T. Bolton. 58.



Fig.8 Caspar David Friedrich
Monk by the Sea, 1809-10
Oil on canvas, 110 x 171.5 cm
Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin

4. Nietzsche. *The Birth of Tragedy*. 60. "[art] alone knows how to turn nauseous thoughts about the horror and absurdity of existence into notions with which one can live: these are the sublime as the artistic taming of the horrible, and the comic as the artistic discharge of the nausea of absurdity."

5. Wallace Stevens. "Saint John and the Back-Ache," *The Palm at the End of the Mind*. 329.

Fig.9
Frederic Edwin Church
Niagara, 1857
Oil on canvas. 108 x 229.9 cm
Corcoran Gallery of Art,
Washington D.C.



Fig.10 Visitors at the Cave of the Winds tour, Niagara Falls, NY.

6. On a portage to Mount Ktaadn, Henry David Thoreau recorded his impressions of the wilderness: "And yet we have no seen pure Nature, unless we have seen her thus vast and dear and inhuman....Nature was here something savage and awful, though beautiful." Thoreau. *The Maine Woods*. 92.

7. Hughes. *American Visions*. 161.

8. A good discussion of the relation between the sublime and the sacred is explored in Richard White's essay "The Sublime and the Other," *HeyJ XXXVIII* (1997), pp.125-143.

7. EMPATHY



Fig.11 "Two bulls," Lascaux Cave, France.

1. Berman. *All That is Solid Melts into Air*. 24.

2. Ibid. Roger Fry remarked on the decline of the imagination in the early 20th century: "...our general humanity is decidedly higher today, but the level of our imaginative life is incomparably lower." Fry. "An Essay in Aesthetics," *Art in History 1900-2000*. 77.

3. Edward Titchener translated the original "einfühlung" as "empathy" meaning "feeling-in."

tour de force, *Niagara*, (Fig.9) is a panoramic portrait of Niagara Falls, the emblem of a distinctly American sublime, that literally situates the viewer on the brink of the cataract. Achieving an unrivaled level of realism in his depiction of the turbulent river, Church (1826-1900) created a sense of dramatic immediacy by eliminating the foreground altogether (compare this to *Monk by the Sea*, who stands firmly on solid ground). Writes art historian Robert Hughes: "At Niagara, the painting insists, you do not communicate with other tourists; you are confronted by God's creation, and through that with His mind."⁷ Seen in the gallery under ideal lighting, the illusion would have been a revelation.

Hallmarks of the romantic sublime suggest parallels with a reality that must have been known to the emotional life of prehistoric humans. Living in a world that was animated by spirits, and keenly aware of the creative and destructive powers of nature, the cave painters would have experienced intimations of a transcendent beyond aroused by sublime phenomena—at once mysterious and terrible, attractive and repulsive. It would not be unjustified to trace a link between the psychology of the sublime and the primitive aesthetic sensibility.⁸

In his revisionist reading of Modernism, the cultural theorist Marshall Berman writes: "[We] have...lost the art of putting ourselves in the picture, of recognizing ourselves as participants and protagonists in the art and thought of our time. Our century has nourished a spectacular modern art; but we seem to have forgotten how to grasp the modern life from which this art springs."¹

A kind of empathy deficit, suggests Berman, has caused an unhealthy division between our lives and culture. Instead, "we find a radical flattening of perspective and shrinkage of imaginative range."² Conceding this view, I want to propose that a retrieval of the concept of empathy, developed in the nineteenth century but falling out of favour in the early twentieth, might serve as a catalyst for reinvigorating the aims of Modern art, and, moreover, make a link back to the archaic imagination. In a frayed and increasingly alienated society, nurturing a stronger sense of *participation* in the present condition of modernity may provide us with a glimpse into the community of the archaic cave artists. (Fig.11)

Art historical discourse in the late Romantic period recorded a significant development in the subject's role in perception. At the centre of this development was the theory of empathy, a concept introduced by Robert Vischer and later modified by Lipps and Worringer. Empathy (Einfühlung) denotes the subject's projection of his or her own thoughts and feelings into the object being perceived.³ The object, whether a work of art or something in nature, is transformed and animated, acquiring additional values that inhere to the subject's mental participation in its

form: through an emotional identification, the observer *activates* the thing. Simultaneously, the object reflects itself back upon the subject, mirroring his or her inner state. Worringer called the pleasure of this mirroring effect, such as when contemplating a scene in nature, "objectified self-enjoyment."⁴

The Romantic landscape tradition traces the influence of empathy in the nineteenth century. Take Friedrich's *Moonrise Over the Sea* (Fig.12): Not passive spectators standing outside but rather participants involved in an experience, we are *transposed* into the seated figures whose faces are turned away from us. Unheard of in the classical tradition, Friedrich asks us to project ourselves into the place of these unnamed people as they gaze upon the horizon—a sunset of brilliant oranges, reds and blues. Based neither on historical nor mythological themes, the landscapes of Friedrich evoke an psycho-emotional response in the observer. It offers a virtual window the contemplation of which the viewing subject can 'lose himself.'

Wilhelm Worringer, in his 1906 dissertation *Abstraction and Empathy*, establishes an oppositional relationship between the urge to *empathy* and the urge to *abstraction*. He argued that each tendency reflects a different attitude toward the world, and were therefore incompatible. Abstract geometrical art of the Byzantine period, and also that of tribal cultures, he claimed, expresses an anxiety about open spaces, a kind of cultural pessimism that looks for refuge in regularity and absolute values. On the other hand, organic, naturalistic forms which characterized the art of the Renaissance, reveals a confidence and sense of security about the artists' place in the world. Reproducing the external world satisfies an "inner need for self-activation," and leads to a feeling of happiness.⁵ If we apply Worringer's theory to the artworks at Lascaux, whose delicate naturalistic drawings of animals convey a feeling of delicate animation, we can make the argument that the mind of prehistoric man possessed a strong capacity for *empathy*. Heinrich Wölfflin, writing earlier than Worringer, suspected an innate capacity in archaic artists: "Forms become meaningful to us only because we recognize in them the expression of a sentient soul," he wrote. "Instinctively we animate each object. This is a primeval instinct of man. It is the source of the mythological imagination."⁶ The realism with which the cave painters depicted the wild beasts they either hunted or feared reveals a significant degree of confidence and mastery over their environment that might be seen as comparable with all succeeding golden ages in which art flourished.⁷

Worringer's theory of abstraction and empathy as opposing tendencies in art is situated significantly the end of romanticism and the beginning of modernism. At this historical hinge the visual arts witnessed a trend toward greater abstraction and a renewed interest in classicism and geometry. Concurrently, there was a turning away from the naturalism and asymmetry of the previous century. Worringer's polemical position thus oscillates between the pious romanticism of Friedrich and a revival of classical abstraction that would come to dominate much of twentieth century art, between sentiment and rationality, subjectivity and objectivity, participation and the impersonal.

The empathetic sensitivity that is evident in the prehistoric paintings at Lascaux, Altamira and other Paleolithic galleries, provides key ingredient in the conception of a Contemporary Archaic. To act with empathy in a time of mediation and abstraction, as Berman says, we can *put ourselves back in the picture*.



Fig.12 Caspar David Friedrich
Moonrise Over the Sea, 1822
Oil on canvas, 55 x 71 cm
Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin

4. Worringer. "Abstraction and Empathy," *Art in Theory 1900-2000*. 66.

5. Ibid., 67.

6. He goes on: "[W]ill this instinct ever die out? I believe not. It would be the death of art." Wölfflin. "Prolegomena to a Psychology of Architecture," *Art in Theory 1815-1900*. 713.

7. "The atmosphere of Lascaux is smiling; something in the look of things here tells us that these wonders were achieved with ease." Bataille. *Lascaux or the Birth of Art*. 23.

8. INTUITION & INSTINCT

"Instinct leads, intelligence does but follow." – William James

1. Sigmund Freud. *Civilization and its Discontents*. 51–52.

2. *Ibid.*, 73.

3. "To have to fight the instincts—that is the definition of decadence." Nietzsche. *The Twilight of the Idols*. 479. And also: "our modern conception of 'freedom' is one more proof of the degeneration of the instincts." *Ibid.*, 545–6.



Fig.13 Spring ice on the upper Niagara River.

4. Bergson. *Introduction to Metaphysics*. 21.

5. *Ibid.*

6. Bergson. *Introduction to Metaphysics*. 23.

7. Bataille. *Lascaux or the Birth of Art*. 130.

8. William James. *Varieties of Religious Experience*. Lecture III, 6–7.



Fig.14 "The Two Bison," Lascaux Cave, France.

In *Civilization and its Discontents* Freud speculates that the renunciation of the instincts demanded by culture has resulted in the collective neuroses afflicting modern man.¹ "Primitive man was better off in knowing no restrictions of instinct," he wrote.² The distrust and consequent suppression of the primary impulses, he suggests, follows the growth of cities, mass society, and the creed of Progress in the nineteenth century, an observation Nietzsche also made.³ Early twentieth-century thinkers Henri Bergson and William James address this imbalance between the internal primary needs and external societal requirements. They claim that by heeding the instincts we can assuage the alienating conditions of modern existence, and potentially gain insight into the 'true' nature of reality. The enthusiasm with which modernist thinkers interrogated the instinctual side of the psyche and its larger implications, I think, is an indication of the archaic unconscious reawakening in our time.

In *Introduction to Metaphysics* the French philosopher Bergson pits *intuition* against *intellect* as two different ways of knowing something. The latter leads to relative knowledge while the former obtains to absolute knowledge.⁴ His privileging of the intuitive faculty, which he defines as "detached instinct" was a challenge to the hegemonic precepts of scientific rationalism and empiricism, which tended to think of reality as fixed and therefore ultimately subject to explanation. Bergson drew the image of a river flowing beneath a hardened crust of ice. The frozen surface, representing the accumulation of rationalistic concepts and abstractions, he claimed, gave a misrepresentation of reality; in fact, it keeps us from seeing 'true' reality below the surface.⁵ By employing the intuition, these static crystalline structures could be broken apart. Bergson's metaphysics effectively inverts the picture of a static reality, replacing it for one of continuous flux. This picture of a mobile reality, he added, is graspable through application of our intuition. Following associated theories on empathy, he described it is an act of "intellectual sympathy" with an object. Without requiring the use of mediating symbols we "enter into" the thing by an imaginative leap and seize what is unique or absolute about the thing.⁶ He therefore characterized intuition as *participation in the direct immediacy of reality*.

In his study of Lascaux, Bataille suggests a similar means of participation in the world. The prehistoric cave painters, whose intuitions were sharper than our own, communicated their understanding of reality through their art: "At Lascaux, gazing at these pictures, we sense that *something is stirring, something is moving*. That something touches us, we are stirred by it, as though in sympathy with the rhythms of a dance; from this passionate movement emanates the beauty of the paintings. They are, we recognize, the individual's free communication with the world around him..."⁷ (Fig.14)

Supporting Bergson's view of the superiority of the primordial intuition, American psychologist William James situated the intuitive faculty in the lower valences of the psyche. He said:

*If you have intuitions at all, they come from a deeper level of you nature than the loquacious level which rationalism inhabits. Your whole subconscious life, your impulses, your faiths, your needs, your divinations, have prepared the premises, of which your consciousness now feels the weight of the result; and something in you absolutely KNOWS that that result must be truer than any logic-chopping rationalistic talk, however clever, that may contradict it. This inferiority of the rationalistic level in founding belief is just as manifest when rationalism argues for religion as when it argues against it.*⁸

The ideas of Bergson and James attempt to revitalize modern perceptions by valorizing the nonrational faculties. Attending to the primal impulses, which artists have always done, argued Bergson, we might learn to better cope with the frustrations and discontent that are a daily part of modern existence.⁹ We might equally nurture a feeling of community with those primordial creative impulses manifested in the artwork of Paleolithic man.¹⁰ In learning to accept and trust these instincts, we effectively build a bridge backward to the archaic imagination.¹¹

9. PLAY

*"It was when he played and, playing, gave his game the permanence and marvelous quality of the work of art, that man shed his careworn mien and took on the lofty stature wherein he placed all his pride."*¹

Play, so basic to human nature, is unjustly regarded as belonging only to the child's world. Too infrequently is play allowed to the adult, who must nonetheless keep it separate from other business.² Yet historically, play is found at all levels of cultural experience. Bataille asserts that the birth of art coincides with man's use of creative gameplay.³ While also linked to religious rites, the drawings and carving made by Paleolithic humans communicate a grace and youthfulness that conveys a familiarity with the replenishing value of laughter (Fig.15). Puerility, it seems, as well as solemnity were integral parts of prehistoric social life. I want to propose that another major facet of the archaic imagination is the knowledge and practice of imaginative play. "Only play," insists Bataille, "and not some practical purpose, could have prompted these clearly gratuitous doodlings."⁴ Curiously, though not all surprising, much of our attraction to prehistoric art is in recognizing their particular quality of excess, their bubbling over joy.

D.W. Winnicott's theory of *transitional phenomenon*, a crucial phase in a child's psychological development, provides a useful analogy for our discussion of the archaic and the conditions in which the first "art" was created. To Winnicott, a child's original state of subjectivity follows from his or her total dependence upon and identification with the mother.⁵ In the first few months of life an infant does not differentiate between himself and the mother's breast, which is always offered without delay. Over time, however, the mother refrains from giving immediate satisfaction to the infant, and thereby establishes a protective *holding environment* in which the child grows increasingly aware of the separateness between *me* and *not-me*, that is, objects that help to define an independent external reality. This intermediate stage Winnicott calls *experiencing*.⁶ It constitutes a child's capacity to recognize the boundaries of an inner psychic and outer objective world that leads to forming a *firm sense of reality*. During this phase the child takes possession of a *transitional object*—often a favourite blanket, soft toy or hard toy, or certain sounds or mannerisms—that help mitigate the inevitable anxiety that goes along with losing the symbiotic connection to the mother. The transitional object serves a symbolical function as well: as a substitute for the mother's breast and also principle motivation for fantasy and play.⁷ Extending his theory, Winnicott considers the transitional phenomenon of *experience* to be at the basis of all science, religious, and cultural production. "It is in the space between inner and outer world, which is also the space between people—the transitional space—that intimate relationships and creativity occur."⁸

9. Bergson, Henri. *Creative Evolution*. 94.

10. "Art would call us back to that primal source." William Barrett. *Time of Need*. 382.

11. Giorgio de Chirico said: "Perhaps the most amazing sensation passed on to us by prehistoric man is that of pre-sentiment. It will always continue. We might consider it as an eternal proof of the irrationality of the universe. Original man must have wandered through the world full of uncanny signs. He must have trembled at every step." quoted in Herschel Chipp. "Mystery and Creation," *Theories of Modern Art*. 401.

1. Bataille. *Lascaux or the Birth of Art*. 36.

2. Painter Agnes Martin said: "In early childhood, when the mind is untroubled, is when inspiration is most possible." *Writings*. 35.

3. Bataille. *Lascaux or the Birth of Art*. 27. "At its outset art was primarily a game. In a major sense it still is. It is play..."

4. *Ibid.*, 35.



Fig.15 "Cave bear," Chauvet Caves, France.

5. Arthur Koestler calls the integrated state of the infant and mother "symbiotic consciousness." Koestler. *The Act of Creation*. 300.

6. D.W. Winnicott. *Reality and Play*. 2.

7. *Ibid.*, 6.

8. D.W. Winnicott. "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena," *Reality and Play*. 13.

9. Bataille. *Lascaux or The Birth of Art*. 35.

10. D.W. Winnicott. "Playing: Its Theoretical Status in the Clinical Situation," 1971.



Fig.16 Franz Marc
Lying Bull, 1913
Tempura, 46 x 40 cm
Museum Folkwang, Essen

11. Charles Baudelaire. "A Philosophy of Toys," *The Painter of Modern Life*. 199.

12. Picasso also said: "It took me four years to paint like Raphael, but a lifetime to paint like a child."

13. Tarkovsky. *Sculpting in Time*. 21.

14. Bataille. *Lascaux or The Birth of Art*. 48.

15. Ibid., 36. The cave painters were able "to create this humanized world out of the play which weds man's inner meaning to the meaning of art, which frees us, if upon each occasion for a time only, from the oppressive yoke of grim necessity, and in some sort brings us nearer that marvelous heritage, that shower of riches for which everyone of us feels himself born."

16. Ibid., 48.

Winnicott's theory of an intermediate transitional phase in childhood might be compared to that indefinite span of years during the Upper Paleolithic period in which early man learned to regard himself as separate from the pure subjectivity of his animal nature. Gradually, over hundred or thousands of years, prehistoric humans learned, through creative play, to enjoy the full significance of their independence. Bataille suggested that Johan Huizinga's term, *Homo ludens* (man-who-plays), is a more accurate description of the cave artist than *Homo sapiens*.⁹ Winnicott equates play with the advent of culture: "The place where cultural experience is located is in the potential space between the individual and the environment (originally the object). The same can be said of playing. Cultural experience begins with creative living first manifested as play."¹⁰

Outside of psychology, the work of modern artists were articulating a related desire to recapture the intensity and excitement associated with both primitive art and the fantasy world of children (Fig.16). "All children talk to their toys," wrote Baudelaire in 1846. "[Toys] become actors in the great drama of life, reduced in size by the camera obscura of their little brains. In their games children give evidence of their great capacity for abstraction and their high imaginative power. They play without playthings."¹¹ Picasso, who voiced most loudly the opinion of the child's superior creativity said: "Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up."¹² The Russian filmmaker Andrey Tarkovsky, echoing Picasso's romantic notion of the artist-as-child, stated: "A poet has the imagination and psychology of a child, for his impressions of the world are immediate, however profound his ideas of the world may be."¹³

In his study of Lascaux, Bataille commented on the spontaneous and energetic quality of the cave painters' linework: "...their fascinating animal beauty, forgotten for thousands of years, still has a primal meaning, one of seduction and passion, of wondrous play, of breathtaking play, behind which lies the desire for success."¹⁴ As with the transitional toy, making "art" was a way for archaic man to free himself from the frustrations connected to the world of work.¹⁵ By surrendering to "the profound seduction of play" one *humanizes* the world.¹⁶

I've briefly outlined the central importance of playing in the creative life of Prehistoric humans. Modern artists sounded a similar evaluation of the child's natural bent for fantasy. If Winnicott's theory make sense to us, we can infer that Paleolithic art represents a decisive stage in evolution which coincides with the very beginning of culture, produced as it were, in a spirit of playful exuberance.

10. LAUGHTER

Homo ricens, the man-who-laughs is implied by *Homo ludens*, and adds a further element to our formulation of the archaic imagination witnessed by the birth of art. "[H]earty laughter," says Octavio Paz, "is a regression to a former state; we return to the world of our own childhood, either individual or collective, to myth and play. We return to the primordial unity-before there was a *you* and *I*-in the form of a *we* that embraces every living being and every element."¹⁷ By laughing, Paz claims, man re-communes with the nature from which he is alienated. The boundary that splits man

17. Paz. "The Metaphor," *Conjunctions and Disjunctions*. 6.

into subject and object temporarily blurs, returning him to a previous state of continuity with the *not-me* (Winnicott). Whereas the world of works is essentially the world of mediation, laughter brings us back to immediacy and the realm of pure sensation. Concurring with Bataille's study of Lascaux, Arthur Koestler says that laughter signals a evolutionary break from our dependence on the biological instincts, from being merely "a creature of habit, governed by a single set of 'rules of the game'."¹⁸ Laughter therefore announces the true birth of Man-the-Creator.

18. "...laughter rings the bell of man's departure from the rails of instinct." Koestler. *The Act of Creation*. 63.

II. THE ARCHAIC IN MODERN ART

"We are just now seeing, amidst the fads and distractions, the strange fact that what has been most modern in our time was what was most archaic, and that the impulse to recover beginnings and primal energies grew out of a feeling that man in his alienation was drifting tragically away from what he had first made as poetry and design and as an understanding of the world."¹ – Guy Davenport

It is said that the ethos of a given age is reflected in its art.² A glance over the twentieth-century reveals the extent of the idea of the *archaic* as an influential force on Modernism.³ Existential philosopher William Barrett observed the "extraordinarily vital attraction" which artists exhibited toward so-called primitive art.⁴ According to Guy Davenport the first renaissance of the "archaic sense of the world" occurred in the mid-nineteenth century. The second renaissance occurred in the early twentieth century.⁵ These two periods of archaic awakening fall under the avant-gardist banners *Symbolism* and *Primitivism* respectively.⁶

Initially a literary movement in reaction against the positivist attitude of the impressionists, Symbolism emphasized the primacy of the imagination ("queen of the faculties," Baudelaire called it), the intuition, and the expression of the individual of the artist. The leading figures, Mallarmé and Baudelaire, favoured subjective inner experience over objective outer observation, spontaneity over systematic application. Primitivism similarly sought refuge from the normativizing tendencies of bourgeois society in sources deemed more vital and authentic. With the western world's exposure to tribal cultures, especially those of Africa and Oceania, artists discovered new formal motifs with which to 'purify' art of its ties to academic tradition. They idealized the primitive artist as being closer to nature, untainted by civilizing processes that were seen as obstructions to artistic vision. Celebrating differences and the liberation of instincts, the Primitivists actively searched for inspiration in the exotic, dream symbols, and the (misinformed) belief in the innocence of the racial other.

The mystic doctrine of *correspondences*, introduced by Baudelaire, helped to establish the Symbolist interest in multisensory experiences. His short poem of 1857 envisions a synaesthetic reconciliation with Nature whereby man is united with her via a "forest of symbols." Intensely vivid experiences, Baudelaire claimed, could be achieved through the imaginative conflation of the senses: suddenly sounds are rendered visible, tastes audible, and smells tactile. The subject finds himself entering into primeval states of sensational affinities.⁸ Baudelaire saw a material world alive with these potentially revelatory encounters, if only one could subvert the conventional models of perception: "[T]he whole of the visible universe is only a storehouse

1. Davenport. "The Symbol of the Archaic," *The Geography of the Imagination*. 28.

2. William Barrett. *Time of Need*. 9-10.

3. After visiting the Paleolithic cave paintings at Altamira, Spain, Picasso famously quipped: "after Altamira, all is decadence."

4. William Barrett. *Irrational Man*. 60.

5. Davenport. "The Symbol of the Archaic," *The Geography of the Imagination*. 27.

6. I realize this is a generalization.



Fig.17 Henri Rousseau
Tiger in a Tropical Storm (Surprised!), 1891
Oil on canvas, 129.8 x 161.9 cm
The National Gallery, London

8. Walter Benjamin wrote: "The correspondences are the data of remembrance-not historical data, but data of prehistory." quoted in Matthew Rampley, "Mimesis and Allegory," *Art History as Cultural History*. 139.

9. quoted in Herschel Chipp. *Theories of Modern Art*. 49.



Fig.18 Henri Matisse
Le Bonheur de vivre (The Joy of Life), 1906
 Oil on canvas, 174 x 240 cm
 Barnes Foundation

10. Davenport. "The Symbol of the Archaic," *The Geography of the Imagination*. 28.

of images and signs to which the imagination assigns a place and a relative value; it is the kind of nourishment that the imagination must digest and transform."⁹

Modernist experiments in poetry and the visual arts were fed on the recognition that darker, unconscious impulses lay behind the surface of consciousness, concealed as it were by the *mask of culture*. The aesthetic concept of *correspondences*, I think, served as a channel through which the archaic was reawakened in the modern period. In one sense, Symbolism, Primitivism, and later on, Fauvism (Fig.18) can be characterized by the desire to explore the expressive and emotive power of unfamiliar signs and images to reveal invisible layers of reality. Oddly, notes Davenport, despite the heroic efforts of Modernism to recuperate a sense of the archaic past, the search for it may also "have contributed to our being even more lost."¹⁰

12. TOWARD A CONTEMPORARY ARCHAIC

So far I have drawn a broad and rather undisciplined definition of what I call the *archaic imagination*. It is a concept related to four fields of theory belonging to the nineteenth and early twentieth century: The aesthetic category of the sublime and the theory of empathy were products of Romanticism, and dealt with the issue of alterity and a spiritual longing to escape the bounds of man's mortal limits. The concept of intuition stressed by Bergson, and the psychology of play developed by Winnicott are two areas of enquiry of the Modern period that urge a renegotiation with our natural instinctive creativity in the midst of a scientific age that privileges logic and the intellect.

I further cited movements within the currents of Modern Art, namely Symbolism and Primitivism, to which the associated ideas of the *archaic*, the *primitive*, and *prehistoric* contributed significantly to their development. As Davenport points out in his essay "The Symbol of the Archaic," the two periods of reawakening of the archaic generated a wide and heterogeneous body of artistic output—literary, pictorial and sculptural. Their separate projects nonetheless shared a common end: to inject a modern industrialized world that was seen as increasingly despirited and alienating, with fresh vitality and primal creativity. To this end, the discovery of the prehistoric past embodied by Lascaux and other Stone Age cave galleries, played no small part.

The discourses and artistic movements outlined in this essay address significant changes at the start of the last century. The different theories briefly discussed here observe and problematize a shift in western culture away from spiritual concerns and toward secularity and scientific rationalism. In modern art, there was a concurrent trend toward greater abstraction and a revival of classical interest in order and mathematical regularity. In the context of increasing abstraction and skepticism, then, I contend that the inheritance of the archaic past—that is, evidence of the irrational origins of the earliest works of art, provides a kind of counter-tradition, or corrective, to the modern loss of primitive vitality and immediate experience. The theories and artistic developments presented here provide a scaffold of references (albeit an incomplete one) that helps to support the conceptualization of a Contemporary Archaic.



Fig.19 "Pride of lions," Chauvet Cave, France.

13. THE AGE OF SIMULATION

"The world that drove Ruskin and Pound mad has worsened in precisely the ways they said would. Eliot's wasteland has extended its borders; Rilke's freakshow outside which the barker invites us to come in and see the genitals of money is a feature of every street."¹ – Guy Davenport

We return to a question broached at the beginning of this essay: In a world that has abandoned immediate 'lived' experience in favour of simulated 'realer-than-real' experience, how is one to act? Where does one look for authentic reality?

In the 1970s French sociologist Jean Baudrillard lamented a world that was witnessing a rapid disappearance of reality. Overtaking the place of the real, he argued, was the "precession of simulacra," the copy without an original.² And its fulfillment was to be found in a vast country that lacked the historical and ideological baggage of his native Europe: America. "The real no longer exists," Baudrillard announced with relish. It has withdrawn behind a screen of copies, imitations, forgeries and kitsch—all things based on simulation.³ Their proliferation throughout a culture of commodity exchange—thanks in no small part to mechanical reproduction—has resulted in the institution of the *hyperreal*. Places such as Disneyland and Las Vegas, he argued, present designed virtual environments predicated on the order of hyperreality and boast of giving the visitor "more reality than nature can."⁴ (Fig. 20) Baudrillard asserts that, in fact, these technological fantasy worlds are the real America. "[It] is Disneyland that is authentic here! The cinema and TV are America's reality!"⁵ Agreeing with his critique of contemporary America, Umberto Eco repeats a similar note in *Travels in Hyperreality* in which he describes the esoteric museums and fake western towns he visits as places "where Absolute unreality is offered as real presence."⁶

Baudrillard's commentary on postmodern culture marks a shift away from the Modernist notions of uniqueness, originality, and innovation. (Octavio Paz has remarked that artists must disregard these "clichés of our time" if they seek what is the truly new and original).⁷ Instead the copy, the sham, and the absolute fake have superseded their authority. At the same time that Susan Sontag was calling for a return to "authenticity," Baudrillard was disclosing the fullscale retreat of reality. He gave this frightening evacuation of meaning and traditional values a name: "the desert of the real."⁸

Art theorist Rosalind Krauss shares the opinion that the loss of unmediated experience is increasingly prevalent in everyday life, which seems to prefer illusion over reality, fiction over truth, titillation over education. She writes:

[S]pectacularization...the something that has, dreadfully, repeatedly, deadeningly enough, become the daily fare of our encounters with the world: with the world as it disappears behind a veil onto which it now projects nothing but its image. This image, a phantom double that hovers, shimmering slight, off-register with the "real" it is ever more insidiously replacing, is the world become spectacle.⁹

Yet Baudrillard is not entirely cynical about such bleak pictures of a world turned absurdly superficial. There is actually something to admire in the embrace of simulation, he suggests. On a road trip through middle America, he writes "...what is absurd is also admirable. The skylines lit up at dead of night, the air-conditioning systems cooling empty hotels in the desert and artificial light in the middle of the day all have something both demented and admirable about them."¹⁰ In fact, the hyperreality of America has resulted in a kind of ersatz utopia Europeans like him have always dreamed about: "But is this really what an achieved utopia looks like? Is this a successful revolution? Yes indeed! ...It is paradise....the US is a paradise. Paradise is just paradise. Mournful, monotonous, and superficial though it may be, it is para-

1. Davenport. "Symbol of the Archaic," *The Geography of the Imagination*. 28.

2. Baudrillard. *Simulacra & Simulations*. 1-42.

3. Ibid.

4. Eco. *Travels in Hyperreality*. 44.

5. Baudrillard. *America*. 101.

6. Eco. *Travels in Hyperreality*. 7.



Fig. 20 Illustrated tourist map of Niagara Falls.

7. Paz. *Alternating Currents*. 19.

8. Baudrillard. "The Precession of Simulacra," *Simulacra & Simulations*. 1. William Barrett says as well: "We...have fabricated for our time a new kind of abstractness, on a mass scale; through our extraordinary mastery of technique we provide a ready-made reflection in place of the real, and not for university dons but for the millions. Our journey into untruth has gone farther than Kierkegaard could have imagined." *Irrational Man*. 270.

9. Rosalind Krauss. "We Lost it at the Movies," in "The Subject in/of Art History," *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 76, No. 4 (Dec., 1994), pp. 570-595. 578-579.

10. Baudrillard. *America*. 49.

11. Baudrillard. *Mass Identity Architecture*. 47.

dise. There is no other.”¹¹

Baudrillard’s attitude seems to promote a kind of passive resignation toward the loss of reality as an inevitable consequence of postmodern simulation. It is, however, a depressing line to travel, touched with pathos and absent of hope. Where, one asks, is the redeeming vision?



Fig. 21

Andy Warhol
210 Coca-Cola Bottles, 1962
Silkscreen ink, acrylic, and pencil on
linen, 209.6 x 266.7 cm
Daros Collection, Switzerland

14. Pop

1. Paz. *Alternating Currents*. 31.

2. *Ibid.*, 32.

3. Sontag. *Against Interpretation*. 10.

4. Brian Massumi’s 1987 essay “Realer than Real” compares Deleuze and Baudrillard’s theories of the Platonic simulacrum. Massumi argues that the former’s version assigns to the simulacrum a positive power: “The positive power of ruse” and of creating difference. Pop Art is the example Deleuze gives of simulacra that have extricated themselves from merely copying a model, thereby generating a reality of their own.



Fig. 22 Roy Lichtenstein
In the Car, 1963
Oil on magna on canvas,
172.7 x 203.2 cm

Finding an appropriate answer to the spread of mass media and simulation techniques in American culture was a major motive behind the development of Pop Art in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Pop Art was, in simple terms, a celebration of all the things that Greenbergian Modernism, headed by the Abstract Expressionists, rejected: the consumer product, television and radio, newspaper comics, Hollywood, the trivial and everyday object, etc. The movement’s enthusiastic embrace of familiar iconography of postwar mass culture, and the often ironic and humorous treatment of it, collapsed the binary relation between high and low culture, fine art and commercial art, surface and depth.

Octavio Paz, writing in the 1970s, saw in the rise of Pop Art a positive reappearance of familiar signs of concrete reality “such as we see it everyday in our cities.”¹ He goes on: “Pop Art is a healthy trend because it is a return to an immediate vision of reality, and, in its most intense expressions, a return to a vision of immediate reality....The world of the streets, machines, lights, crowds—a world in which each color is an exclamation and each form of sign pointing to contrary meanings.”² Paz is therefore sympathetic to Sontag’s assessment of the movement, which she says makes its content so obvious (so “what it is”) that it effectively foils the “philistinism” of interpretation.³ The exaggerated dot paintings of Roy Lichtenstein and the serial silkscreen prints of Andy Warhol are characteristic of Pop’s appropriation of the techniques of advertising to create a democratic style that examines the role of visual media in contemporary society. (Fig. 21 and 22).

The two positive readings of Pop Art by Sontag and Paz recovers a degree of immediate reality amidst the proliferation of its substitute by reproductions. Or rather, it highlights the recognition of simulation as an inextricable product of modern life. Can the lessons of Pop Art help us to reconcile the desire for old notions of truth and originality with the unabashedly fictive, hyperreal environments so fondly criticized by Baudrillard? Can *art* give a new value to landscapes which traffic in illusion and artifice without recourse to outmoded categories of ‘authenticity’?⁴

15. THE VALUE OF ILLUSION

Nietzsche was one of the first thinkers to identify the redemptive function of illusion as a means to address the modern predicament.¹ In *The Birth of Tragedy* he establishes a basic antagonism between Apollo, the god of light, reason, and appearances (illusion); and Dionysus, the god of joy and suffering, the instincts, death and rebirth.² Dreams and intoxication, culture and vitality, logic and intuition, the modern and the archaic. The tension between these two mythological figures, he claims, is charged with creative and destructive potential. Reconciliation, however, is made possible through *illusion*, in making art. Nietzsche emphasizes that while the Socratic faith in reason separates man from his sources of vital nourishment, the reinstatement of Dionysus as a corrective cannot be accomplished without the aid of his opposite, Apollo, who shields man from the terrifying truth of suffering. He writes: "That the artist esteems appearance higher than reality is no objection to this proposition. For "appearance" in this case means reality once more, only by way of selection, reinforcement, and correction."³ To awaken the archaic (Dionysian) spirit in the present era, as I've proposed in this essay, would open a path to finding a way back to humanity's primordial powers—a *renewal of vitality through art*. In the same sense that Dionysus lifts the veil from man's eyes to expose the dark chaos that lives in his heart, Picasso once said: "Art is a lie that makes us realize truth."⁴

A late painting by Agnes Martin (1912–2004) might serve to illustrate (or further complicate) my point. *Homage to Life* (Fig.23) depicts a solid black trapezoid standing upright on a graphite grey field. The trapezoid is centered on the canvas, creating the impression of immovability and a tomblike stillness. Martin engages the observer in a play of spatial ambiguity while deliberately stirring up more questions than answers. Quickly apparent in this deceptively minimal figure-ground composition is a visual paradox: Are we gazing at the side of an ancient burial mound as the ziggurat-shaped profile suggests? Or conversely, are we peering at not a solid object at all, but the edges of a hole in the ground, a square cavity receding in perspectival space? Solid or void? Mass or shadow? Heaviness of earth or weightless air? A something or nothing? We remain forever suspended between polarities. The painting's title implies a certain mood of solemnity, but only adds to the uncertainty as to what the figure represents, if anything more than a geometric shape. This conundrum, one senses, hides a knowing smile. Martin's *homage*, I think, is really to the *mystery* that life offers, and a cunning rebuke to those who would profess to know its secrets (Nietzsche's Socratic Man, for instance). Claims to answering the ultimate questions of existence are aggressively met with by Martin's enigma: Either one is crushed beneath the weight of stone, or swallowed up by a bottomless void. (Or both?).

The dionysian work of this artist would seem to provide that "pleasurable illusion" Nietzsche said was necessary for man's deliverance from individual fate and existential suffering, immersing him temporarily in the community of the unconscious—the Primal Unity. In her prose piece "What is Real?" Martin reflects on the artist's struggle to achieve a perfect awareness of reality. "In this life we are struggling from death into life./ This has been remarked by all sages of all times./ The adventure of life is the relinquishing of death and the acceptance of life."⁵ In much of her writing she emphasizes the experiences of joy, innocence, beauty, happiness and egolessness as states of being one aspires to.⁶ These recall the Dionysian hallmarks of transgression, revelry, and self-forgetting, which Nietzsche opposed to the Apollonian principles of individuation and moderation.⁷ In considering Martin's oeuvre, in particular her focus on evoking "abstract emotions" and inspiration (intuition) we note confluences with our formulation of the *archaic imagination*. Martin's aesthetic approach, I think, suggests a possible model for reintroducing the archaic.

1. "For the more clearly I perceive in nature those omnipresent art impulses, and in them an ardent longing for illusion, for redemption through illusion, the more I feel myself impelled to the metaphysical assumption that the truly existent primal unity, eternally suffering and contradictory, also needs the rapturous vision, the pleasurable illusion, for its continuous redemption." Nietzsche. *The Birth of Tragedy*. 44–45.

2. Plutarch called Dionysus "the whole wet element." Daniel J. Boorstin. *The Creators*. 202.

3. Nietzsche. *The Birth of Tragedy*. 123.

4. Photographer Robert Adams mused that the role of the artist today was to "create new illusions in the service of truth." Robert Adams. *Beauty in Photography*. 5.

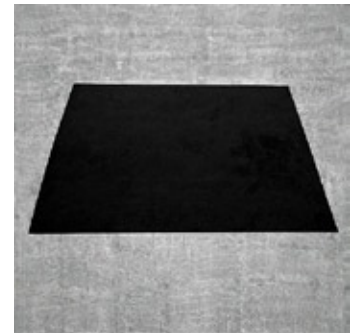


Fig.23
Agnes Martin
Homage to Life, 2003
Graphite on paper, 152.4 x 152.4 cm
Dia: Beacon, Beacon, New York.

5. Agnes Martin. "What is Real?," *Writings*. 112.

6. Ibid., 94. "Responding with joy is the path and we should work and eat with joy. The joy counts and nothing else does."

7. "Under the charm of the Dionysian not only is the union between man and man reaffirmed, but nature which has become alienated, hostile, or subjugated, celebrates once more her reconciliation with her lost son, man." Nietzsche. *The Birth of Tragedy*. 37.

16. PAINTER OF MODERN LIFE



Fig. 24 Edward Ruscha
Actual Size, 1962
Oil on canvas, 182.9 x 170.2 cm
Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

1. Martin was labeled AbEx and Minimalist though she flatly rejected both.
2. Christopher Knight calls Los Angeles "the first authentic mass culture environment in world history." "Ruscha in Context: In the Beginning was the Word," *Edward Ruscha Lannan Museum*. 54.

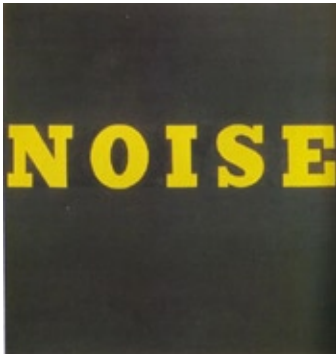


Fig. 25 Edward Ruscha
Noise, 1963
Oil on canvas, 182.9 x 170.2 cm
Anderson Fine Arts Center,
Anderson, Indiana.

3. Hal Foster. "At the Whitney: Ruscha's Hollywood Sublime," *London Review of Books* (2 Sept 2004).
4. Ibid.
5. John Coplans, "Concerning 'Various Small Fires': Edward Ruscha Discusses His Perplexing Publications," *Artforum*, 3:5, (February 1965).

Fig. 26
Edward Ruscha
Standard Station, Amarillo, Texas, 1963
Oil on canvas, 165.1 x 307.3 cm
Hood Museum of Art,
Dartmouth College.

Another contemporary artist whose practice demonstrates the potential recuperation or extension of the archaic into the present is Los Angeles based Edward Ruscha (b.1937). Emerging in the 1960s like Martin, Ruscha's enigmatic art defies easy categorization; his style is at once folk, Conceptual and Pop.¹ For subject matter he mines his immediate surroundings—the hyperreal landscape of street signs, billboards, and roadside architecture of the West Coast.² Like Warhol in New York, Ruscha borrows heavily from the vernacular of postwar America. Referencing everyday consumer products such as Spam (Fig. 24) and Sun-Maid Raisons he playfully subverts the object's message by transforming it into a graphical re-presentation in the context of fine art, making the mundane appear extraordinary. Some of his early word paintings, usually a colour field dominated by a single word or phrase, elicit a curiously synaesthetic reaction, especially when the word is onomatopoeic (for example OOF, DING, and HONK). The viewer seems simultaneously to *look* at and *hear* the bold letters speaking as though accompanied by their own soundtrack. This exploration of visual noise produced by an environment saturated with visual media, recalls in a way the Symbolist concept of *correspondences*, but in Ruscha's case the perceiver travels not so much through a forest of symbols as simulacra. (Fig. 25)

A recurring motif in Ruscha's art, the gas station, is elevated to almost superhero status in his large oil painting *Standard Station, Amarillo, Texas* (Fig. 26). This transfiguration of banal roadside architecture into a kind of ecstatic futurist landscape led art theorist Hal Foster to call Ruscha's work semi-ironically the "Hollywood Sublime."³ But if his art suggests a certain romanticism of mass culture, it is, in the final analysis, a hollow gesture; for, as Foster admits, "there is not an inch of nostalgia" to be found here.⁴

Indeed as Ruscha's cult photo-books testify, his practice is closer to cultural anthropology than to poetry, more documentary than interpretation. Planted firmly in the here-and-now, his work reflects Baudelaire's apt summation of modern life as "the transient, the fleeting, the contingent." Ruscha's best known art book is a photomontage of a Los Angeles streetscape. *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* (Fig. 27) was conceived as a documentary of a specific place that did no more than what the title stated. "They're a collection of 'facts'...a collection of 'readymades'," the artist said.⁵ Emphasizing the mass reproducibility of the book rather than its uniqueness as an art object, Ruscha had one thousand identical copies printed. "What I'm after is a kind





Fig. 27
Edward Ruscha
Every Building on the Sunset Strip, 1966
Photographic Book (Selected Spreads),
Ed. 1000
18.1 x 14.3 cm

of polish...a clear-cut machine finish," he insisted.⁶ In treating all his books (among them *Twentyfour Gasoline Stations*, *Thirtyfour Parking Lots*, *Various Small Fires*, and *Nine Swimming Pools*) with cool detachment and a decidedly deadpan tone, Ruscha delivered one of the first critiques of aesthetic judgment which until then had been dominated by the modernist cult of the personality. Yet for all their conceptual neutrality, a trace of dark humour and desolation seems nevertheless embedded in the books' glossy finish. In an era characterized by a lack of authentic reality, writes Foster, Ruscha's wry, vaguely apocalyptic, commentaries on American culture map out a way of "relishing...a world depleted of difference and thus of meaning."⁷

Whereas the darkly ambiguous *Homage of Agnes Martin* beckons the observer to step closer to the void in order for us to contemplate a world replaced with illusion and non-reality, it is Ruscha, finally, who nudges us over the edge. (Fig. 28) Crucially, his art seems to imply that the fall down does not necessarily mean the end. Rather, wouldn't the act of leaping alleviate some of the nausea of uncertainty? By letting go of the desire for meaning, his work suggests, we set ourselves free. By surrendering ourselves to the abyss, a glimmer of hope opens up: a vision that transcends the emptiness. Might Nietzsche have sympathized with this conclusion? "The true world—we have abolished. What world has remained? The apparent one perhaps? But no! *With the true world we have also abolished the apparent one.*"⁸

6. Ibid.

7. Hal Foster. *Art Since 1900*. 508.

8. Nietzsche. *The Twilight of the Idols*. 486.

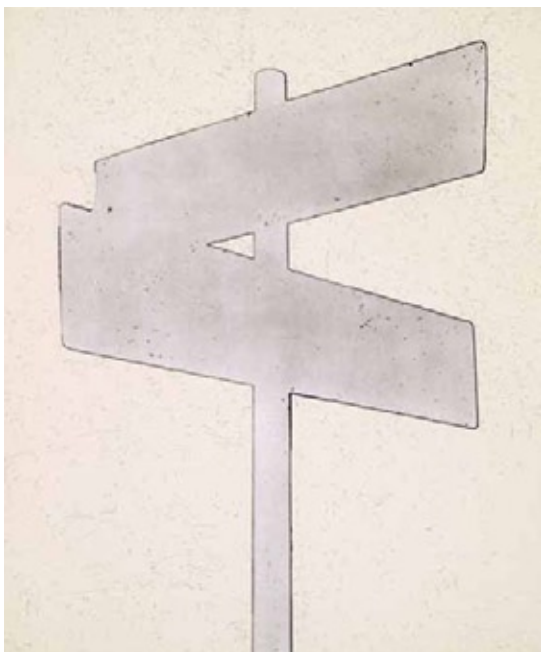


Fig. 28
Edward Ruscha
City Space, 2006
Color aquatint with sugar lift flat bite
and hard ground etching,
60.3 x 50.2 cm

17. ARCHIVE, COLLECTION, COLLAGE

"Oh, slow-eyed spectator, this machine is grinding you out of existence."

– Stan Brakhage, *The Camera Eye*



Fig. 29 Eugène Atget
Boulevard de Strasbourg, 1912
Albumen print, 22.5 x 17.8 cm
George Eastman House purchase:
ex-collection Man Ray.

1. Baudelaire's model was Constantin Guys, whose cartoon sketches of Parisien life captured the flux and flow of the modern city.

2. Benjamin's Arcade's project, which he called a "primal history" of the 19th century would surely be the literary equivalent of Atget's photographic collection.

3. One senses a similar empathy in Ruscha's ironic treatment of his adopted home Los Angeles. Compare this to Baudrillard's position which is mostly absent of any such feeling.

4. Gregory Ulmer. "The Object of Post-Criticism," *The Anti-Aesthetic*. 84–5. See also Matthew Teitelbaum. *The Art of Montage*. See also Guy Davenport's *Objects on a Table*.

5. Davenport. *Objects on a Table*. 107.

It is the French photographer Eugène Atget (1857–1927) who best deserves the label "painter of modern life."¹ While Ruscha grapples with the vicissitudes of the post-modern city of Los Angeles, Atget recorded the rapidly changing fabric of Paris undergoing modernization. Agnes Martin, in contrast to both, chose an alternate orientation, which was to "turn her back to the world" in search of the absolute.

It is largely due to the preservation of his extensive photographic archive by Berenice Abbott the world has come to know and remember Paris at the end of the nineteenth century. Atget's taxonomic inventory of street vendors, empty cafes, courtyards, shop fronts (Fig. 29), interiors, plants and gardens, accumulated over years of dedicated documentation, set a precedent for all subsequent efforts at photographing a city.² Atget's insistence that he made merely "documents for artists," that is, visual reference aides for painters and sculptors to make 'real' art is, perhaps, the most striking aspect of his legacy. Despite this, we detect in his prints an underlying empathy with his subject (whether it be an empty courtyard at dawn, an organ grinder, or prostitute). His images, whether consciously or not, betray a tenderness towards the other, an undeclared delight in differences.³ (Fig. 30) Atget's photographic archive, at least to contemporary eyes, communicates more than an 'literal' collection of data. For while we can respect the man's devotion to his craft, what we are humbled by is the aesthetic vision that emerges out of the creative process, as if it were incidental to the main intention. One's admiration for Atget, then, consists in the fact that though he claimed to make only documents free of artistic pretensions, he could not conceal (or fail to express) time and again a deep affection—perhaps even love—toward the object of his camera's gaze. He was, in a sense, an artist-in-spite-of-himself.

Paralleling the development of the archival mode of photography epitomized by Atget, but with its origin in Cubism (Picasso, Braque), *collage* was the dominant formal innovation in twentieth century art.⁴ According to Davenport the significance of collage as a modernist strategy was its ability—through quotation, parody, and cultural sampling—to give form to "the new enigma of reality that came in with the century."⁵ Collage art took fragments of found material and assembled



Fig. 30
Eugène Atget
Avant l'éclipse. Place de la Bastille, 17 April 1912
Albumen print, 18 x 24 cm
Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris.

them into unexpected new relations. The still lifes of Kurt Schwitters, for example, assemble the flotsam and jetsam of the modern city (streetcar tickets, advertisements, newspaper clippings, etc.) onto a single surface, which he called *Merzbilder* in reference to the new society of consumption (Fig.31). In a similar way, Atget's collections of urban snapshots documenting ephemeral moments of street life create the effect of a *photographic collage*, a composite poetic portrait of modern Paris. (Fig.32)

The design of certain postmodern cities evince the principle of collage, juxtaposing artificial landscapes of diverse activities and functions, though normally for the purpose of entertainment. Niagara Falls, for example, presents a landscape of fragments and incongruent identities: The romantic waterfall is juxtaposed with a picturesque park on one side and a classical garden on another side, contrasting with the neon fantasyland of Clifton Hill, the aquatic theme park Marineland, and the glittering hotel-casinos. Further away from the falls are the enormous industrial hydroworks, celebrity named golf courses, factories and chemical plants, all of which are surrounded by unremarkable suburban neighbourhoods. Niagara Falls is an assemblage of unlikely landscapes that is comparable to the quintessential collage city, Las Vegas.⁷ (Fig.32)

The city observed through the photographic collection is a modern experience. As the work of Atget in Paris and Ruscha in Los Angeles testify, this mode not only makes an objective recording but also can subjectively evaluate the place under question. Not unlike collage, which uses materials from existing sources, photography aestheticizes by refreshing and renewing aspects normally overlooked, disclosing invisible dimensions of the subject, place or thing. Walter Benjamin called the revelatory power of the camera lens the *optical unconscious*, for its ability to show details hidden to the naked eye.⁸ This term is equally suited to the "facts" and "documents" of Ruscha and Atget. A second descriptive term, which better accounts for the collective nature of these above mentioned practices, was coined by American photographer Walker Evans, who in 1964 termed his own collection-based work *lyric documentary*.⁹ Evans recognized that the aesthetically neutral structure of the archive was nonetheless inflected by the photographer's subjectivity and artistic bias no matter how dispassionate or impersonal he or she might claim to be. Atget and Ruscha are cases in point.

18. RETURN TO AURA

The disappearance of 'real reality,' if Baudrillard's provocation is to be believed, constitutes a major crisis of postmodernism. Indeed, it is hard to deny the influence of simulation on our daily lives, proliferated most evidently by the photographic image—on television, in the movies, and increasingly through the virtual world of the internet. The litany of complaints over the deadening effects of the 'image-world,' which must also include the hyperreal cities touched on in this essay, would thus appear to fulfill Benjamin's warning of the liquidation of *aura* due to mechanical reproduction. I introduced two contemporary artists, Agnes Martin and Edward Ruscha, whose approaches to a world dramatically transformed by simulation and mass visual media, provide possible models for responding to the consequent vacuum of meaning. The development of Pop Art in postwar America, with which Ruscha's early work



Fig.31 Kurt Schwitters
Merz Picture 32A (Cherry Picture), 1921

7. Baudrillard called Las Vegas one of the principle cities of modernity.

8. Benjamin. "A Small History of Photography."

9. Roberta Smith. "Main Street Postcards as Muse," *The New York Times*. Feb, 5, 2009.



Fig.32 Clifton Hill at night.



Fig. 33 Eugène Atget
Marchand Abat-Jours, 1899-1900
 Albumen Print.

is commonly associated, was offered as a mode of cultural commentary that embraces the vernacular language of advertising while cunningly subverting the original intention. The referents and embedded meanings of popular images deployed by Warhol in his repetitive silkscreens of soup cans and celebrities, and by Ruscha in his word paintings and mass-produced photobooks, are overturned, revealing the emptiness the lies behind the surface, as well as highlighting the absurdity of our icons. At the same time, these practices suggest a way by which aura might be refashioned out of existing materials, a *simulacral aura* that precludes recourse to modernist categories of authenticity, originality, and presence. In this positive, active sense (in contrast to Baudrillard's nihilism) Pop Art emphasizes the cultural value and potentially redemption function of illusion through the making of appearances.

19. THE CONTEMPORARY ARCHAIC

"To me there is no past or future in art. If a work of art cannot live always in the present it must not be considered at all. The art of the Greeks, of the Egyptians, of the great painters who lived in other times, is not an art of the past, perhaps it is more alive today than it ever was." – Pablo Picasso (1923)



Fig. 34 "Great Hall of the Bulls" Lascaux Cave, France.

The present article began by asking how the desire for 'authentic' experience in a world of increasing simulation might be satisfied. It was proposed that a retrieval of the idea of the archaic might provide a counterforce to the loss of immediate experience and concrete reality. A somewhat fragmented exploration of what was called the *archaic imagination* followed that touched on discourses on the sublime, empathy, intuition, and play. In addition, significant movements in Modern Art, Symbolism and Primitivism, were cited; each pursued in different ways the recovery of primal creative forces in the face of a modernity characterized as alienating, superficial, and denatured. I suggested that certain nineteenth and early twentieth century theoretical fields and artistic movements lay out a possible groundwork for the formulation of a Contemporary Archaic.

Returning to a discussion of the postmodern crisis of reality, both Martin and Ruscha's singular, label-defying practices recuperate or extend the archaic into the present, I argued. To me, they exemplify two possible attitudes to confront the existential problems of (post)modern life—either to turn away from it completely in search of an image of ideal perfection in the former case, or to look it mockingly in the face in the latter case. Finally, a third practice, the documentary work of French photographer Eugène Atget, was offered as an example (and prototype) of the archival mode which employs the medium's special capacity to disclose the invisible dimension of a place: to materialize a latent reality through making images.

In a similar way this thesis, a documentary of Niagara Falls through collection and photography, is a project of revealing the invisible. While stopping short of declaring itself a demonstration, it attempts to engage with facets of the archaic that were outlined in the present essay. Rather, it is more accurate to say that the images comprise an aesthetic vision, reflection upon which the archaic as a key figure arose and was elaborated on. This kind of retrospective method of investigation echoes the surrealist Jean Cocteau's words: "First find, then search."

Forming the bulk of the thesis, several photographic studies at different sites in Niagara Falls present an ambivalent position. Recalling Worringer's theory of art, which pits abstraction against empathy, the work seeks to reconcile incompatible and opposing ideas. A hint of this dialectical play of opposites is already implicit in Evan's concept lyric documentary, which recognizes photography as an artistic medium that is neither purely objective nor purely subjective. In as much as they refer to the documentary mode—concerned with seriality, geometrical order, and impersonality—the photographs fall into a tradition of modernist abstraction. In as much as they also offer a poetic meditation on place—investing in the emotional and associative power inherent in images—the photographs evince a certain neo-romanticism. Through bringing together the rational and the sentimental, the romantic and the modern, the wet and the dry, this thesis tries to create a new unity—constructing a case for an *abstract-empathy*.

The pursuit of the Contemporary Archaic is a less programmatic motivation behind the exploration of Niagara through documentary photography. It must be admitted that the question of seeing with "prehistoric eyes" is meant metaphorically, posed in response to the weakening of modern perceptivity.¹ Nonetheless, I believe that an awakening of the archaic sense of the world is a means to address the perceived loss of authentic reality at the contemporary moment. I think that a natural place to start from is, like Picasso at Altamira, by returning to the cave.

In 1985 a group of caves was discovered by a French diver, Henri Cosquer, near Marseilles. Much of the cave, including the entrance, was submerged underwater. Carbon dating studies reveal that the artwork there belongs to two distinct phases: the later phase, 19,000 BC, includes wall paintings and animal carvings in a style similar to those found at other Paleolithic galleries such as Lascaux, Chauvet, and Les Trois Frères. The earlier phase, 27,000 BC, consists mainly of imprints made with human hands. Concentrated in chambers that are above sea level are numerous hand stencils in black and red paint. In other places the walls were engraved by fingers running through the soft white limestone. The "artwork" at the Cosquer cave add yet more questions to those already posed by other known Prehistoric cave sites. Their obscure origins further enrich our appreciation of the sensitivity and imaginative depth of our earliest ancestors who made art. Amongst the traces left by the dwellers at Cosquer is a perfectly preserved hand print made by a child (Fig.35). Researchers discovered it high up on the wall and believe that the child must have been lifted up by an adult to reach this remote spot invisible to the casual glance. A reaching out in the dark. It is maybe the first, the purest gesture of the *archaic imagination*, a profound, silent and joyful protest against our eternal effacement. A challenge remains for us: Can we learn to see in the dark again?



Fig.35 "Panel of the Horses," Chauvet Cave, France.

1. "None of us can every retrieve that innocence before all theory when art knew no need to justify itself, when one did not ask of a work of art what it said because one knew (or thought one knew) what it *did*." Susan Sontag. *Against Interpretation*. 1.



Fig.36 Child's handprint, Cosquer Cave, believed to be 27,000 years old.

NIAGARA PROSPECTS

July 6, 2008, 8:05 pm

"You must be *desperate...*" said the owner of the local horsetrack, shaking her head in total disbelief.

"I couldn't help myself," I apologize, glancing over my shoulder at the camera planted in front of the billboard that faces the eastbound 401. And yes, maybe a little?



PLATE 1
NEAR WOODSTOCK

FREE INFORMATION



FIG 1.1 VIA RAIL STATION, DOWNTOWN NIAGARA FALLS

I. International Reputation

world-famous Falls
"the world's most famous address"
World's Most Romantic Setting
One of the World's Greatest Man Made Wonders
world's most mesmerizing natural phenomenon
one of the most turbulent rapids in the world
Discover a new world class attraction
World's Largest Free-flying Aviary!
world's largest steel roller coaster

2. Uniqueness & Special Attraction

Niagara's Must Do Attraction
The Street of Fun By the Falls
a journey through entertainment history
Have a seat with Elvis and the gang
Discover a miniature world
A world created entirely with LEGO bricks
Visit the Stars and play with the Beasts!
Niagara's Wildest Animal Adventure!
spectacular dino-themed environment
Niagara's Most Exciting Golf Experience
experience the wonders of Guinness World Records in person
Niagara's Highest, Longest Most Exclusive Falls Experience!
14 Million People have been Wowed. Now It's Your Turn
authentic re-creations of the scenes that made them famous
See and touch the actual barrels that carried these daredevils over the Falls
Experience the Mystery and Art of Illusion in this *LIVE*, Las Vegas Style magical production
absolute exhilaration of confronting millions of gallons of water crashing like thunder into the rocks nearby
Live Like a Daredevil from the edge of your seat
Canada's Only Mechanical Bull Ride
Niagara's Only year-round aerial attraction
Visit all your favourite Stars!
a truly unique experience
Ride-to-the-Top
Thrilling Rides

3. Sublime Wonder

A Force of Nature
Natural Wonder
Experience the Wonder!
Welcome to Our Wonder!
you're stuck by the wonder of it all
a voyage that transcends everyday reality
one of the world's most majestic natural wonders
Experience One Wonder After Another In Niagara
Discover the countless wonders of the Niagara Region
the magnificent Falls is only the beginning
Niagara has changed, and it's magnificent!
No wonder it takes your breath away
unparalleled beauty of Niagara Falls
Spectacular...in any season!

Let your spirit soar
Beyond Belief
inspiring awe

4. Beyond Reality

an amazing encounter
An Extraordinary World Apart
Do Something Extraordinary
Journey back through time
Take a Break from Reality!
Amazing Virtual Tours of Attractions
A Mystical Journey into the Abyss of time
Featuring the Legend of Niagara Falls!
Discover paradise!
Let yourself be mesmerized
It's magical
misty magic
Enchanting

5. Views

See for yourself
breathtaking views
no view is more breathtaking
Come For the View. Fall for the Food.
Gorge-ous Views and More!
Spectacular views by Mother Nature
Enjoy magnificent Falls views
Niagara's best view of Nature' greatest wonder
you'll marvel at once-in-a-lifetime views of the mighty Falls
Enjoy breath-taking views of the Falls
Come on up—and *really* see the Falls!
experience the splendour of the Niagara by air
You came to see the Falls, now get to know them!
The best views from spectacular fallsvue rooms and suites
Discover the thundering Falls from a totally new and awesome perspective
enjoy a superb panoramic view of the Falls and the Niagara Region
The view from the lounge is one of the finest in the area
offering the "front row centre" view of the fall
Seeing is believing—yet you won't believe the magnificent panoramic view
A spectacular view of Niagara Falls creates the perfect touch
all of Niagara unveils before your eyes
Thrill to the best view of the Falls
Spectacular Guestroom Views
Breathtaking Falls Observation
overlook the breathtaking Falls
Savour spectacular Fallsvue
breathtaking views from floor to ceiling
The Only thing we overlook is the Falls
Best View of the Falls Guaranteed
Overlooking the River's Edge!
superb fallsvue

6. Fun & Adventure

The Ultimate High
The Most Fun By the Falls
Welcome to Fun!
The fun never ends!
Be Thrilled in 'R' World!
Buckle up for fun
Soak in the excitement of the Falls
Clifton Hill...Fun by the Falls!
Get the Real Falls Adventure
An adventure that will test your sense of direction.
The most excitement by the Falls!
Discover the excitement by night!
Just Plain More Fun!
"entertainment Niagara"
The Fun starts here
indulge your sense of excitement and adventure
We've got fun down to a science
Stay and Play by the Falls
for old world charm and lots of new world excitement
great attractions and amusements on Clifton Hill...
Getting lost have never been so much Fun!
Plan to spend the whole day to enjoy all the fun
EAT-DRINK-PARTY & PLAY
More fun than you can shake a stick at
Awesome fun
The Adrenaline Rush
Experience the Excitement
Come into a world of fun
Explore the Roar
Ready Set Jet!
See! Feel! Hear!
Wow. Hourly.

7. Novelty & Technology

The New Niagara Falls
Giant Sixty Foot Screen
The Power and the Story
Experience the Falls in a whole new way
Lights, Nights & Wonders
New Shows! New Special Effects!
Niagara's Newest Thrill Attraction
State-of-the-Art Motion Simulator
an awesome show of ever-changing colours every night after sunset
the latest in thrills and chills presented by live actors and technological wizardry!
The awesome power of the might Falls captured in amazing 3D/4D special effects!
...the realness of our 180 degree wrap-around screen will have you on the edge of your seat!
Experience the newest in 4D Technology
spectacular fireworks displays over the Falls
your interactive entertainment destination!
Experience the Falls in a whole new way
The Newest way to see the Falls!

8. Horror

A Horrifying Experience!
a startling experience
Dare to visit The Haunted House. You'll be too frightened to be nervous
Over 95,000 Have Chickened Out, it's That Scary!
Be warned, this is not for the weak of heart!
get the bejesus scared out of you!
Will you survive?
for a SCREAMING Good Time!
Niagara's Most Terrifying Experience

9. Proximity to the Falls

One block to the Falls!
Great fun at your doorstep
The Centre of it all in Niagara
Walking distance to the Falls
Located directly in front of the Falls
Conveniently located 1,500 yards from the falls
The natural wonder is only a two minute walk from the hotel
Niagara's most famous landmark...next to the Falls
At the edge of one of the world's greatest wonders
Minutes away from one of nature's most beautiful accomplishments
amazing attractions only minutes from the brink of the Falls
one of the world's most impressive natural wonders, right outside your room
One of nature's most awesome displays of beauty and power is just outside your window
spectacular rooms and suites directly in front of the magnificent Falls
The Falls are just a one-minute stroll
only minutes from the amazing Horseshoe Falls
Enjoy it All in the Heart of the Fallsview District!
Only 10 Minutes from Niagara Falls
Enjoy Niagara from the Water's Edge!
The Majestic Falls and Exciting Attractions at your Doorstep.
We're right in the middle of all the excitement!
We're in the Heart of it all
Closest Hotel to the Falls

10. Prestige & Authenticity

Attraction of the Year
a celebration of life
Experience the Luxury
Outstanding charm ...unforgettable dining
affordable luxury overlooking the Horseshoe Falls
The Authentic Falls Experience
Where Comfort and Elegance Blend
Class and luxury by the Falls
The next level of luxury
refresh your mind and revive your spirit
Enjoy "tranquility & harmony"
Experience Everything Special
Release. Recharge. Relax.
Refresh Your Senses

II. Making Memories

The pictures will be treasured forever
Come to Niagara and you will leave wanting to return again and again
This is what you'll talk about all the way home
Niagara's most "unforgettable attraction"
...ready to offer you Niagara's most unforgettable experience
Niagara is about having fun and making memories
a memory that will last forever
We build Adventures...You cherish the memories
One Destination Endless Memories
the ride of their lives!
thrill of a lifetime

12. Family Friendly & Affordable

More to Explore!
There is Something for Everyone
sure to be a hit for the entire family!
Fun, Friendly and affordable
Special Kids Rate
more fun for your money!
sight-seeing comfort, day and night
Romantic, Scenic & Affordable
Meeting and Exceeding Your Expectations
Your Home away from Home in Niagara!
There is so much more to Niagara than just the Falls
Experience TWO thrilling adventures for the price of one!
Old fashioned family fun!
Tropical Adventure for all ages
An adventure for the whole family!
unlimited admission
one terrific deal!
Free Slice of Fudge
Free Daredevil Gallery
Great Family Fun!
Lots of Family Fun
Kids Stay Free!

13. Instructive

Be A Star!
Discover Us!
Come Explore!
Get you camera ready!
Feast Your Eyes On This
Get personal with the Falls today!
Don't forget the live entertainment
Don't Dare Miss It!
Just don't miss the popular Niagara attraction!
Don't forget your camera
Please NO PHOTOGRAPHY

4TH JULY
AT NIAGARA FALLS
 THE GREATEST WONDER OF THE AGE
MONS
BLONDIN
 Will repeat his Wonderful Feat of
CROSSING
THE NIAGARA RIVER
 UPON A TIGHT ROPE & RETURN
ON MONDAY
THE 4th OF JULY
Between 3 & 4 P. M. He will cross from the American side to the Canada side
TIED UP IN A SACK
 Mons BLONDIN will also repeat his World-Renowned Exercise on the
TIGHT ROPE!
On the Ground, previous to the Terrific and Sublime Trip across Niagara River
PRICE OF ADMISSION 25 CENTS
 Splendid Seats have been erected for the occasion, price 25 Cents Extra
 TIGHT ROPE Performances to begin at 3 P. M. GENERAL ASCENSION at 4 P. M.

FIG 1.2 POSTER ADVERTISING BLONDIN'S PERFORMANCE ON JULY 4, 1859

20,000 BEDS

A DIRECTORY

CANADA

A

AAAA ROYAL MOTEL . A1 MOTEL . A-1 STAR INN . ADMIRAL INN . ADVANCE INN . ADVANTAGE INN . ALPINE MOTEL . AMERICA'S BEST VALUE INN . AMERICANA CONFERENCE RESORT & SPA . ARKONA MOTEL . ASTON MICHAEL'S INN BY THE FALLS . ASTON VILLA MOTEL/ ACE OF HEARTS BED & BREAKFAST . AMBIANCE BY THE FALLS B & B . ANDREA'S BED & BREAKFAST . AS YOU LIKE IT B & B . ASCOT MANOR B & B

B

BEST WESTERN CAIRN CROFT HOTEL . BEST WESTERN FALLSVIEW . BEST WESTERN FIRESIDE HOTEL . BLACKSTONE INN . BLUE MOON MOTEL . BONANZA MOTEL . BROCK PLAZA HOTEL/ BED OF ROSES BED & BREAKFAST . BEDHAM HALL BED & BREAKFAST . BLUECREST BED & BREAKFAST . BUTTERFLY MANOR

C

CADILLAC MOTEL . CANADIANA INN . CAMELOT INN . CANDLELIGHT INN . CARAVAN MOTEL . CARRIAGE HOUSE MOTOR LODGE . CASCADE INN . CAVALIER MOTEL . CLARION PRESIDENT HOTEL BY THE FALLS . COMFORT INN CLIFTON HILL . COMFORT INN FALLSVIEW . COMFORT INN FALLSVIEW . COMFORT INN NORTH OF THE FALLS . CONTINENTAL INN . COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT . CRYSTAL MOTEL/ CHESTNUT INN BED & BREAKFAST . CAIRNGORM BED & BREAKFAST . COSY INN BED & BREAKFAST/ CAMPARK RESORTS CAMPING

D

DAYS INN CASINO . DAYS INN FALLSVIEW DISTRICT . DAYS INN LUNDY'S LANE . DAYS INN & SUITES BY THE FALLS . DIPLOMATT INN . DOUBLETREE RESORT LODGE & SPA FALLSVIEW . DUTCH INN/ DANNER HOUSE BED & BREAKFAST . DUNN STREET INN BED & BREAKFAST

E

ECONO LODGE BY THE FALLS . ECONO LODGE WEST OF THE FALLS . E-LODGE MOTEL . EMBASSY SUITES HOTEL FALLSVIEW . EMPRESS INN . EVERHEART COUNTRY MANOR . EXPRESS INN/ EASTWOOD LODGE

F

FAIRWAY MOTOR INN . FALCON INN . FALLS MANOR MOTEL & RESTAURANT . FALLSVIEW INN . FLAMINGO MOTOR INN . FLAMINGO THRIFTLODGE . FONTAINE BLEU MOTEL/ FAIRBANKS HOUSE BED & BREAKFAST

G

GRAND NIAGARA RESORT . GREAT WOLF LODGE/ GREYNA GREEN/ GOOD SAM PARK

H

HAMPTON INN BY THE FALLS . HAMPTON INN NORTH OF THE FALLS . HAPPINESS INN . HENRI'S
MOTEL . HILLTOP MOTEL . HILTON NIAGARA FALLS . HIPWELL'S MOTEL . HOLIDAY INN BY THE
FALLS . HOSTELLING INTERNATIONAL . HOTEL EUROPA . IMPERIAL HOTEL AND SUITES .
HOWARD JOHNSON HOTEL BY THE FALLS/ HONEYMOON HOUSE

I

INN BY THE FALLS . INN OF THE PARKWAY

K

KINGS INN MOTOR LODGE . KINGS INN NEAR THE FALLS . KINGSWAY MOTEL . KNIGHTS INN
BY THE FALLS/ KING WALDOF'S TENT & TRAILER PARK . K.O.A. KAMPGROUND

L

LA QUINTA INN . LINCOLN MOTOR INN FALLSVIEW DISTRICT/ LION'S HEAD BED & BREAKFAST

M

MAPLE HAVEN MOTEL . MAPLE LEAF MOTEL . MARRIOTT NIAGARA FALLS FALLSVIEW . MATERA
HOTEL LTD . MELODY MOTEL . MICHAEL'S INN . MID-TOWN MOTEL . MOTEL 6/
MOTOR HOME TRAVEL CANADA

N

NIAGARA FALLS MOTOR LODGE . NIAGARA FALLSVIEW CASINO RESORT HOTEL . NIAGARA
FAMILY INN . NIAGARA GATEWAY MOTEL . NIAGARA INN INC . NIAGARA INN MOTEL . NIAGARA
PARKWAY COURT MOTEL . NORTHWAY MOTEL/ NEUBURG WINERY B & B . NEW HADDEN HALL
. NIAGARA INN BED & BREAKFAST

O

OAKES HOTEL OVERLOOKING THE FALLS . OASIS MOTEL . OLD STONE INN . THE OLYMPIA
MOTEL . OVERNIGHT INN

P

PARKWAY MOTEL . PASSPORT INN . PILGRIM MOTEL . PRESIDENT MOTOR INN/
PARK PLACE BED & BREAKFAST

Q

QUALITY HOTEL NEAR THE FALLS . QUALITY INN CLIFTON HILL

R

RADISSON HOTEL & SUITES FALLSVIEW . RAINBOW MOTEL & RESTAURANT . RAINBOW MOTOR
INN . RAMADA CORAL RESORT HOTEL . RAMADA PLAZA HOTEL FALLVIEW . RAMADA SUITES &
CONFERENCE CENTRE . RED CARPET INN & SUITES FALLSWAY . REGENCY MOTOR HOTEL MOTEL
. RENAISSANCE FALLSVIEW HOTEL . REX MOTEL & VIDEO . RITZ INN NIAGARA . RIVERBOAT
MOTEL . THE RIVERBREEZE . RIVERVIEW MOTEL . LA RIVIERA MOTEL . RODEWAY INN BY THE
FALLS . RODEWAY INN FALLSVIEW . RODEWAY INN & SUITES LUNDY'S LANE/REDWOOD B & B .
RIVERS EDGE BED & BREAKFAST

S

SAM'S MONTROSE HOTEL . SENECA MOTEL . SHERATON FALLSVIEW HOTEL & CONFERENCE
CTRE . SHERATON ON THE FALLS . SI LOUNGE . SKYLINE INN . SOUTH LANDING INN . SPACE
MOTEL . STANLEY MOTOR INN . STARDUST INN . SUNSET INN . SUPER 8 HOTEL . SURFSIDE INN .
SURVIVOR INN/STAMFORD VILLAGE BED & BREAKFAST . STONELEIGH GUEST HOUSE .
STRATHAIRD BED & BREAKFAST . SUNSHINE HOUSE/SCOTTS TENT & TRAILER PARK . SHALAMAR
LAKE CAMPGROUND . SKERKSTON SHORES CAMPGROUND

T

TERRACE MOTEL COURT . THREE DIAMOND INN . THRIFTLODGE AT THE FALLS . TOPPER MOTEL
. TRAVELODGE BONAVENTURE . TRAVELODGE AT THE FALLS . TRAVELODGE NEAR THE FALLS .
TROPICANA INN MOTEL/TRILLIUM BED & BREAKFAST

V

VACATION INN . VALUE INN INTERNATIONAL . VICTORIA INN BAR & GRILL . VICTORIA MOTOR
INN . VILLAGER LODGE . VOYAGEUR INN MOTEL/VICTORIAN CHARM BED & BREAKFAST . VILLA
ALEXANDREA BED & BREAKFAST

W

WALDORF MOTEL . WATER'S EDGE INN . WHITE ROSE MOTEL . WILLOW MOTEL

Y

YOGI BEAR'S JELLYSTONE CAMP RESORTS

USA

3 STAR MOTEL

A

ANCHOR MOTEL

B

BEL-AIRE MOTEL . BEST WESTERN SUMMIT INN . BIT-O-PARIS MOTEL . BUTLER HOUSE BED &
BREAKFAST . PARK PLACE BED & BREAKFAST . BUDGET HOST . BUDGET INN

C

CARAVAN MOTEL . CASCADE MOTEL . CASTLE MOTOR INN . CHATEAU MOTOR LODGE .
CINDERELLA MOTEL & CAMPGROUND . COMFORT INN THE POINTE

D

DAYS INN NIAGARA FALLS . DRIFTWOOD MOTEL

E

ECONO LODGE AT THE FALLS . ECONO LODGE AT THE FALLS NORTH

F

FALLS MOTEL . FALLSIDE HOTEL & CONFERENCE . FIT EXPRESS . FOUR POINTS SHERATON
NIAGARA FALLS

G

GRAND HOTEL NIAGARA . GRAND SUITES MOTEL

H

HAMPTON INN NIAGARA FALLS . HILLSIDE MOTEL . HOLIDAY INN SELECT NIAGARA FALLS .
HOWARD JOHNSON NIAGARA FALLS . HOSPITALITY INN OF NIAGARA

I

INN ON THE RIVER

J

JOHN LASHER HOUSE

K

KNIGHTS INN

L

LITTLE BLUE ANGEL HOUSE

M

MANCHESTER HOUSE . MOONLITE MOTEL

N

NIAGARA FALLS MOTEL . NIAGARA RAINBOW MOTEL . NIAGARA FALLS INTERNATIONAL HOSTEL

P

PASSPORT INN . PELICAN MOTEL . PORTAGE HOUSE MOTEL

Q

QUALITY INN

R

RAMADA NIAGARA FALLS . RAINBOW & FOURTH LTD . RIVIERA MOTEL . RODEWAY INN .
ROYAL MOTEL

S

SANDS MOTEL . SCOTTISH INN . SHIVA'S TRAVELERS LODGE . SUMMIT PARK COURT . SUNRISE
MOTEL . SUPER 8 HOTEL . SWISS COTTAGE INNS

T

TRAVELERS BUDGET INN . TRAVELODGE FALLSVIEW



It was then that began our extensive travels all over the States, to any other type of tourist accommodation I soon grew to prefer the functional motel—clean, neat, safe nooks, ideal places for sleep, argument, reconciliation, insatiable illicit love.

Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*

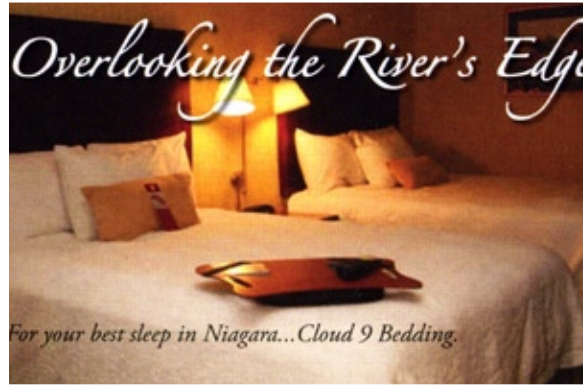
FIG 2.1 SOUVENIR POSTCARD, C. 1955

SOME ROOMS









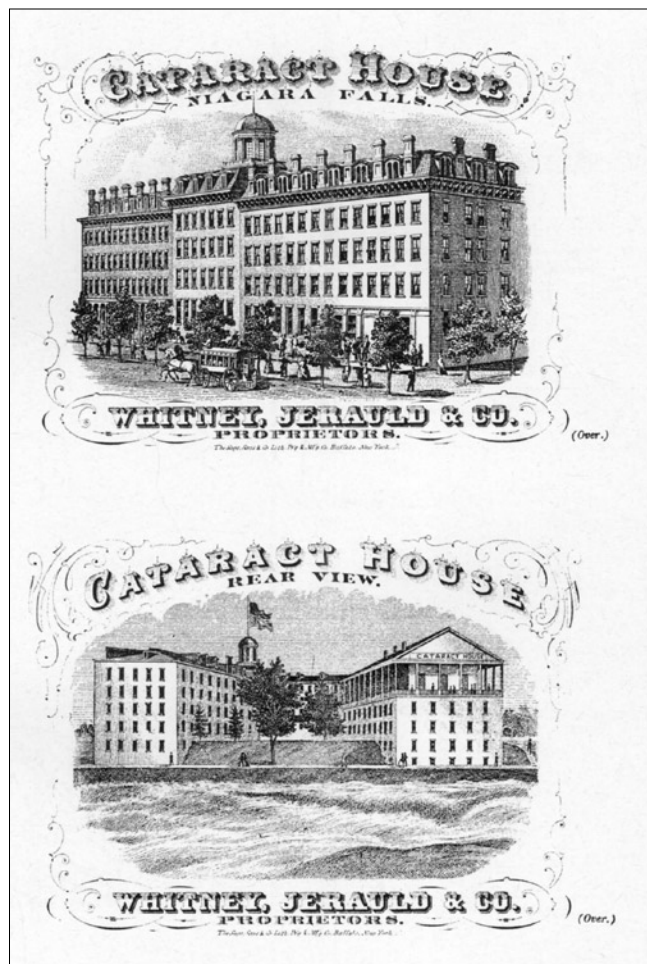
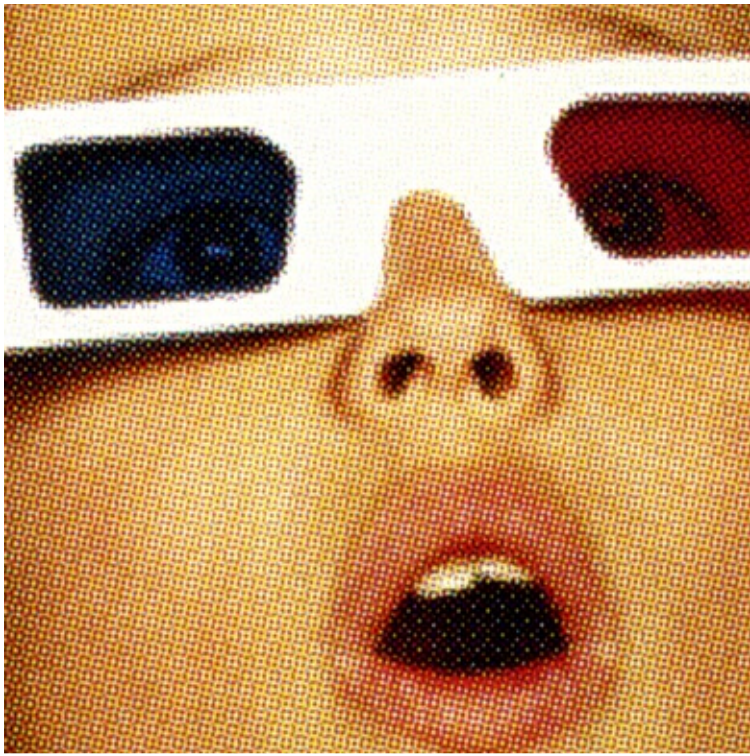


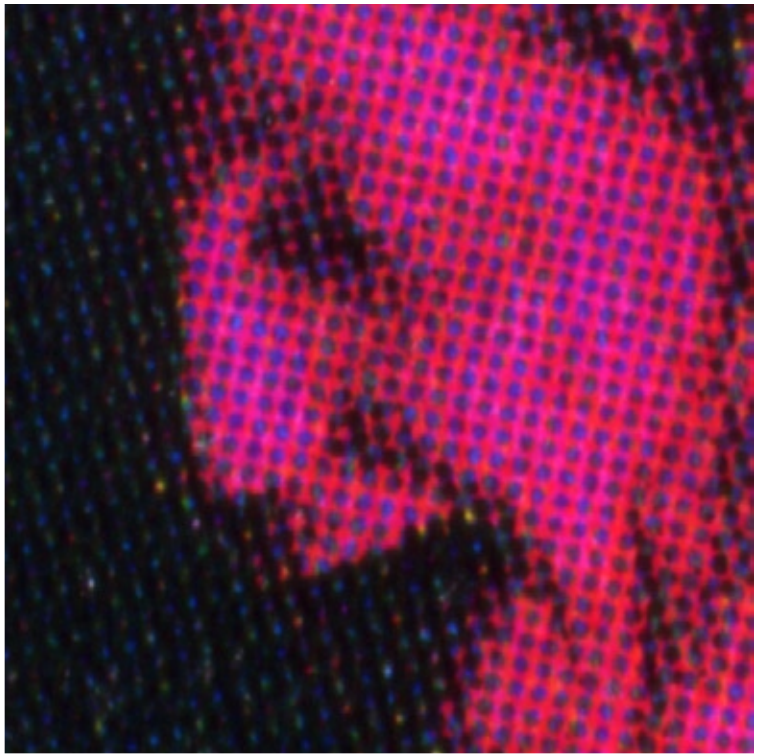
FIG 3.1 CATARACT HOUSE - ADVERTISING CARD, C. 1865

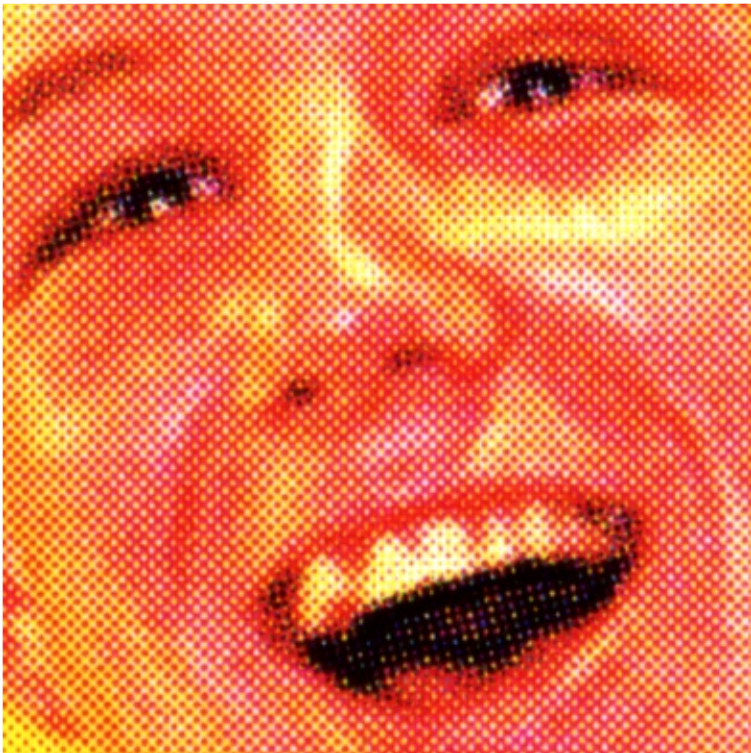
VARIOUS GAZES
&
SUPERMAN

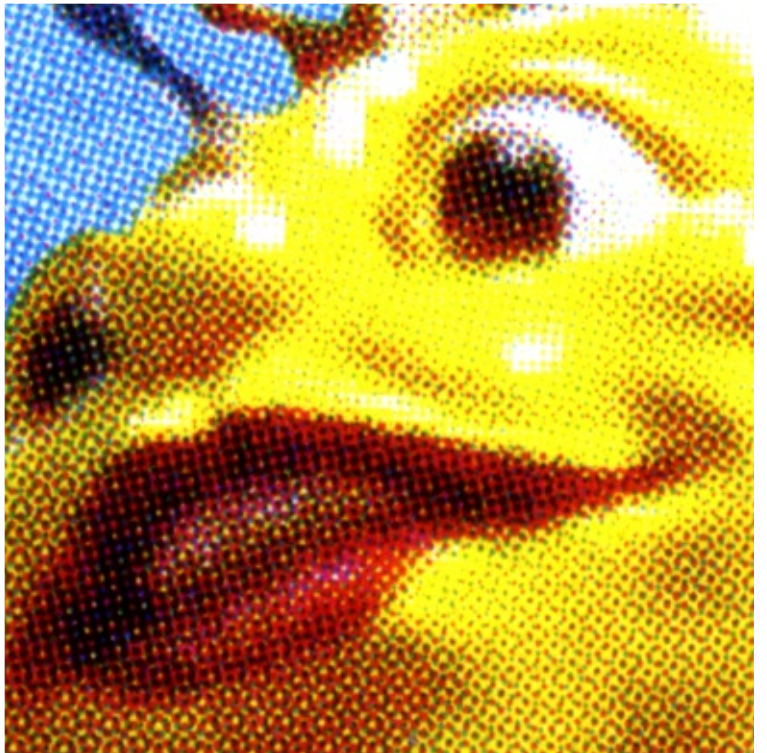
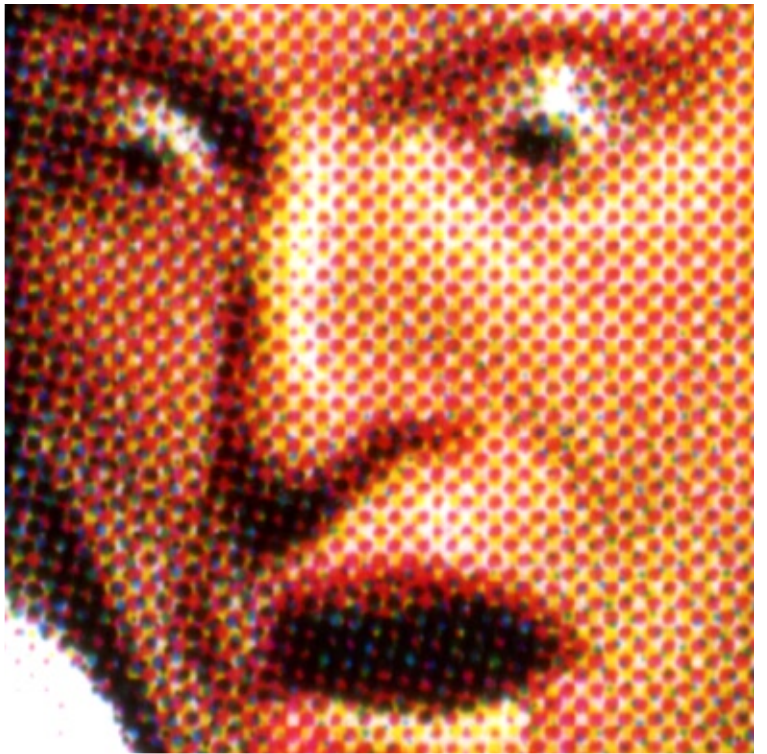
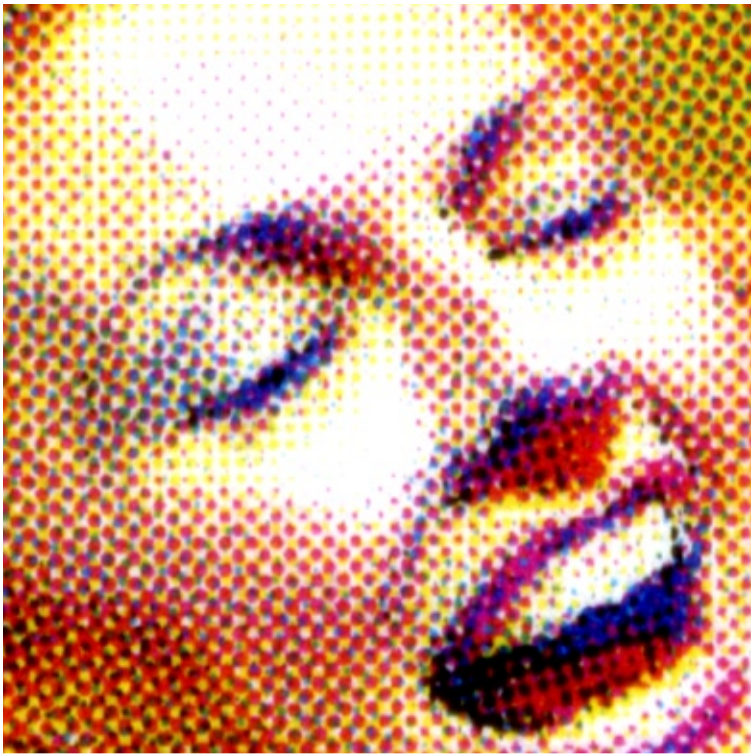


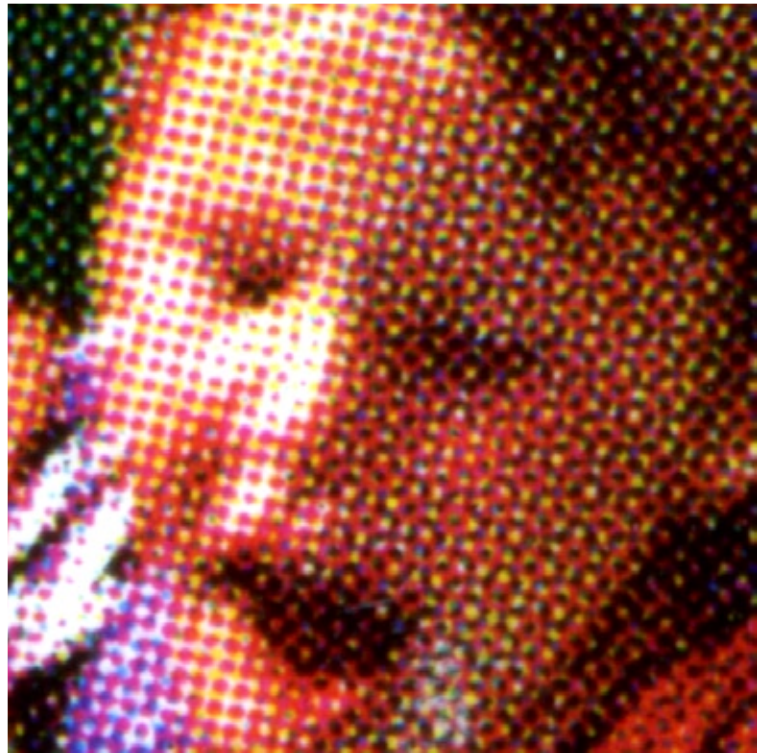
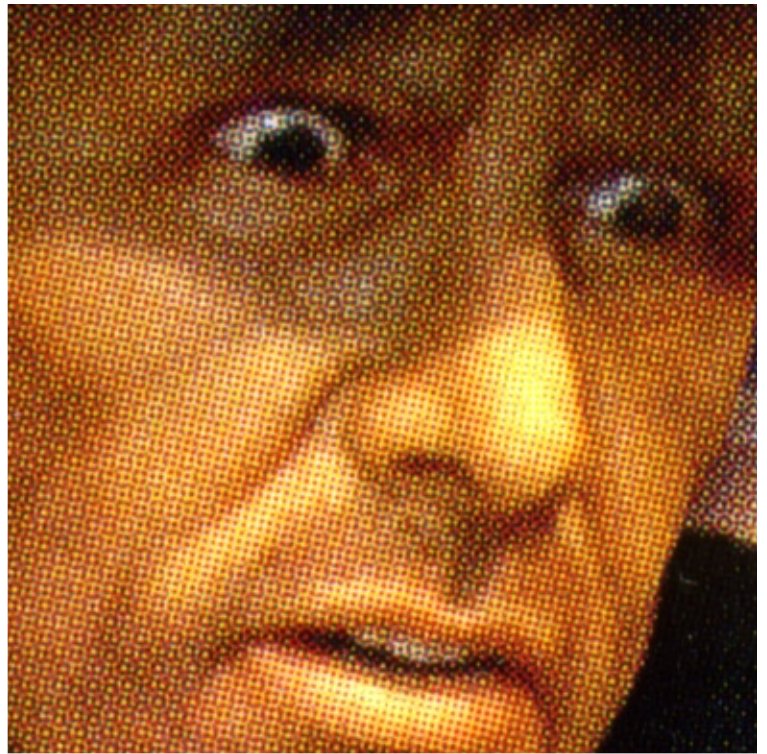
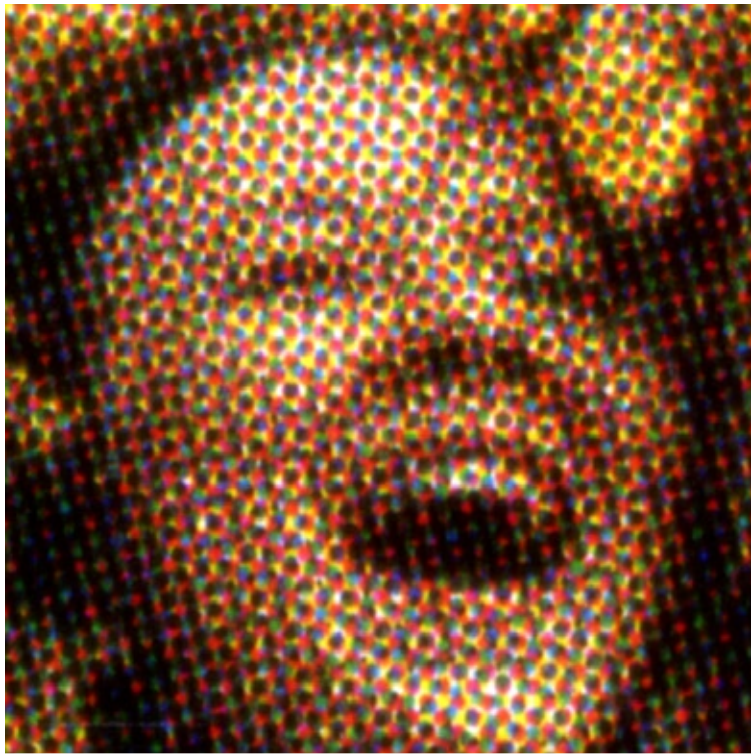
Man is only man on the surface. Life the skin, dissect: here the machineries begin. Then you lose yourself in an unfathomable substance, alien to everything you know and yet of the essence.

- Paul Valery, *Cahier B*, 1910



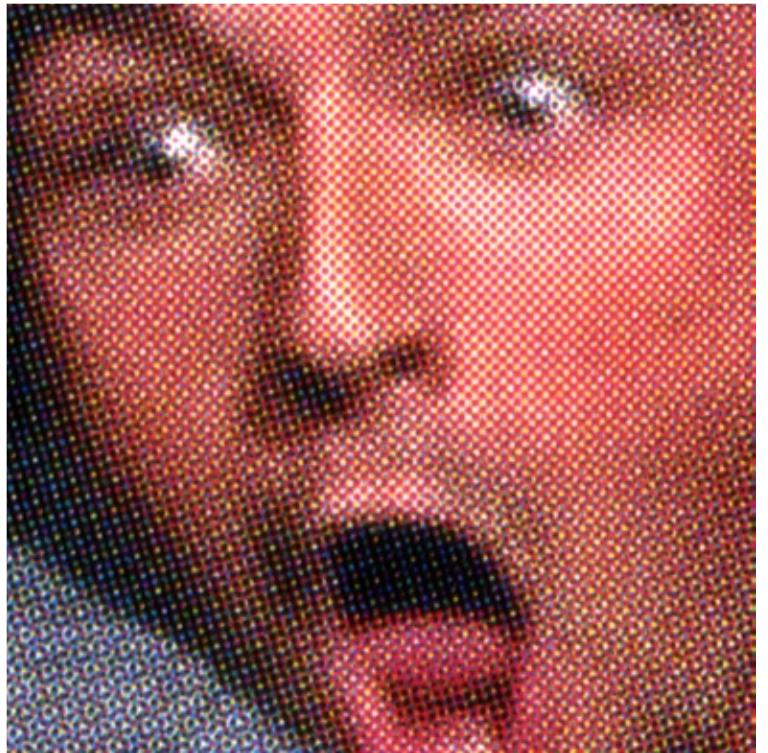
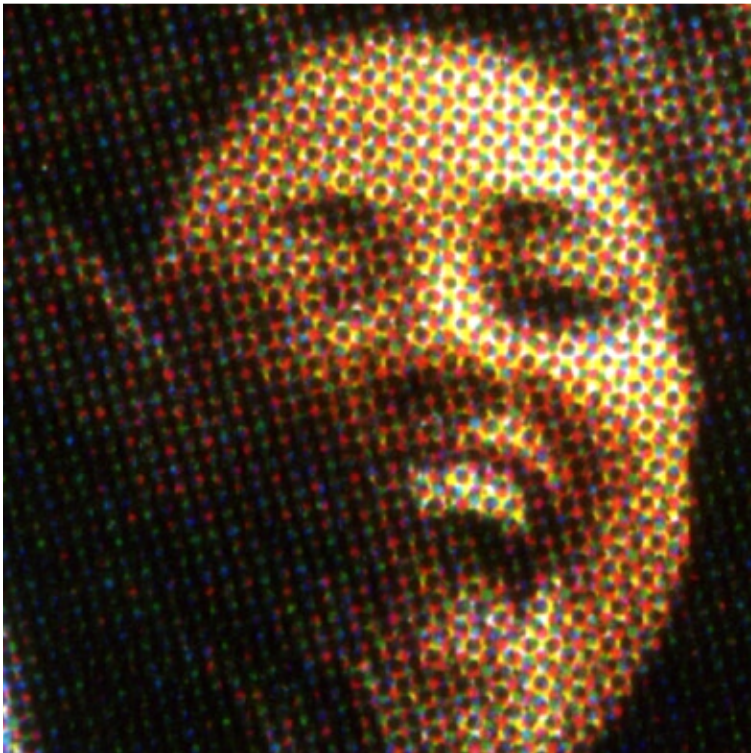


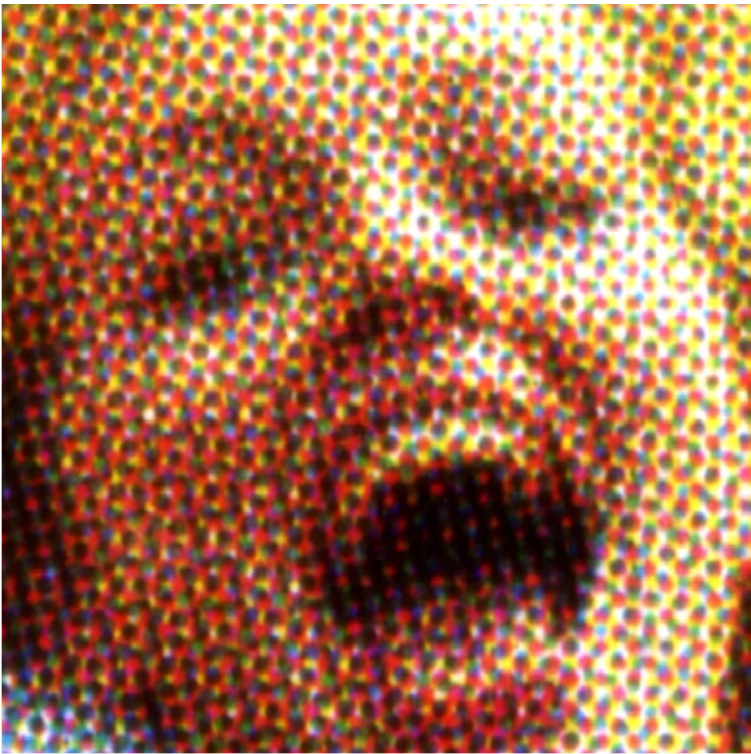


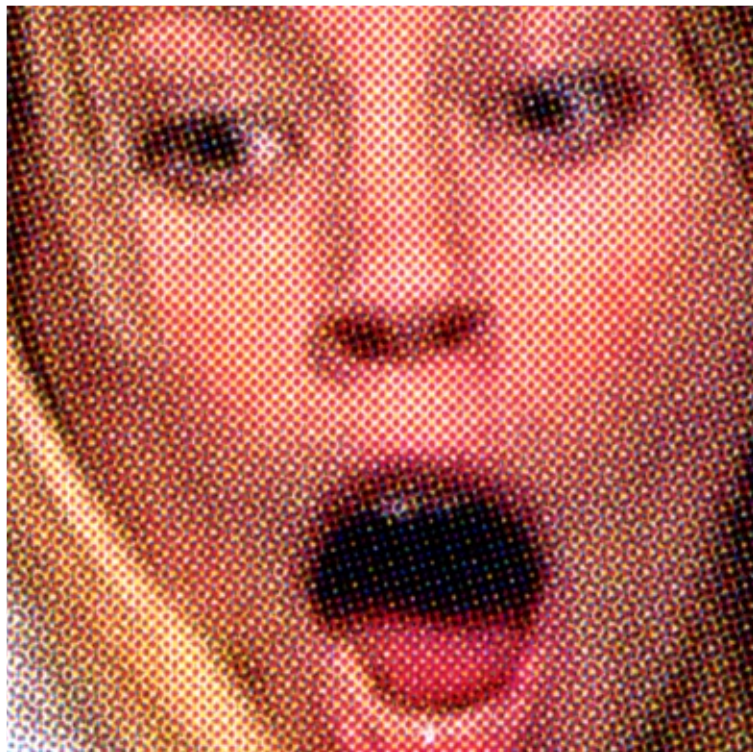
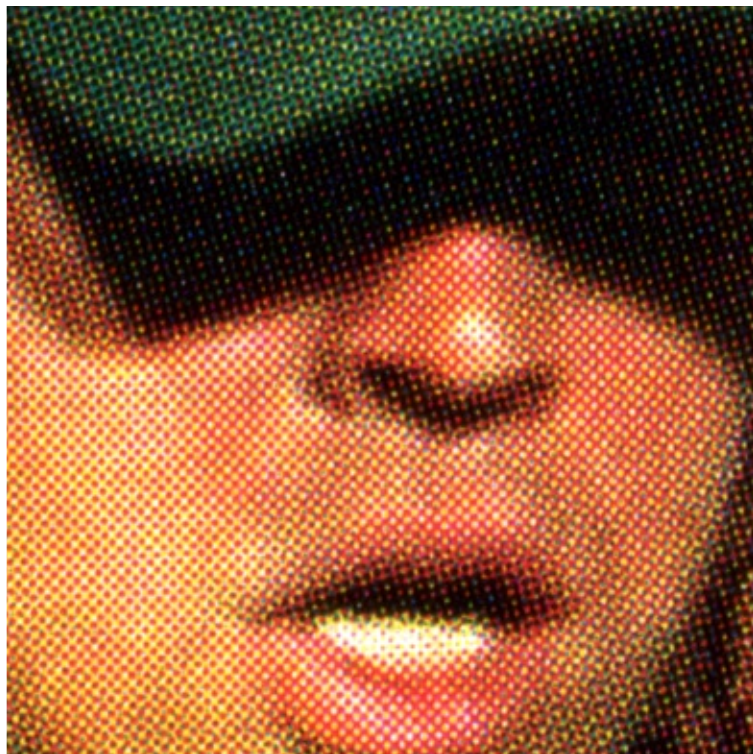
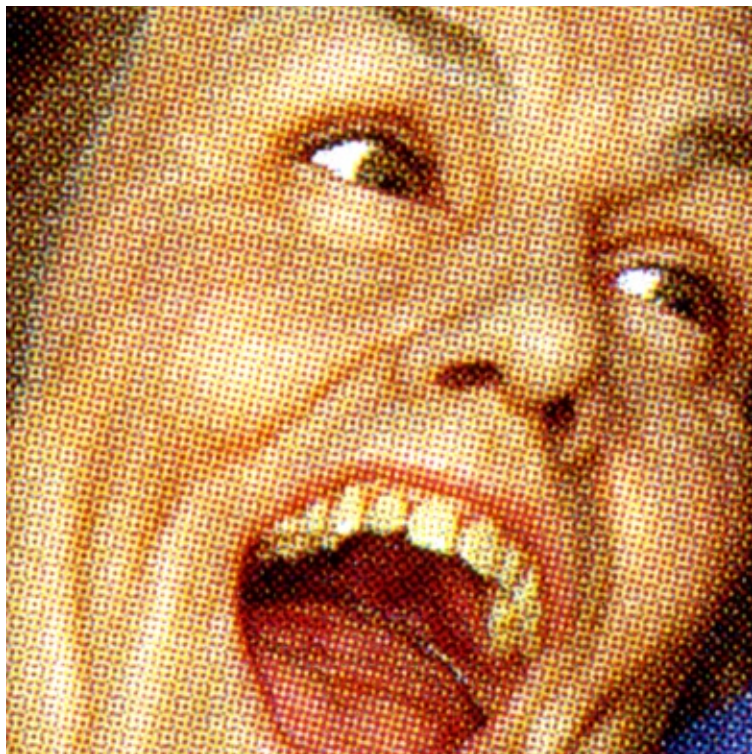


The most curious mystery within laughter comes from one's rejoicing in something which places a vital equilibrium in danger. We even rejoice most strongly thus.

- Georges Bataille







Laughter is the satanic: it is thus profoundly human.

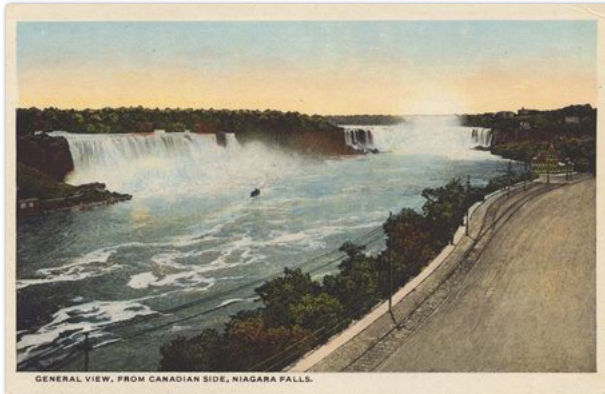
- Charles Baudelaire





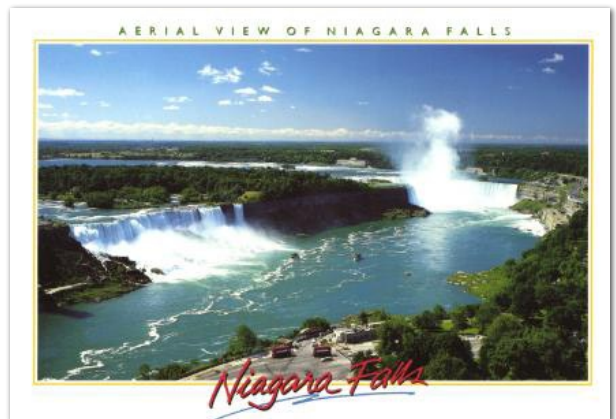
FIG 4.1 CRIMINALS HALL OF FAME MUSEUM

POSTCARDS



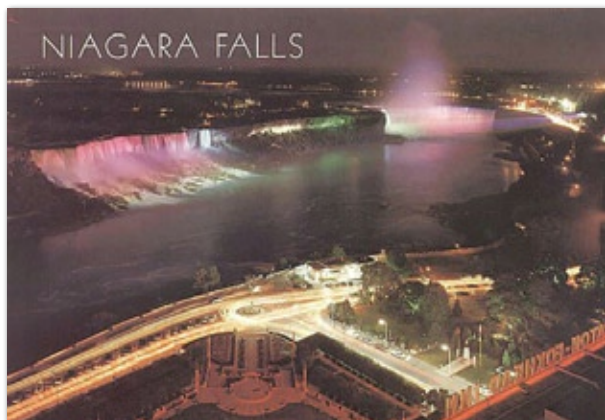
a	b
c	d
e	f

FIGURES 5.1



a	b
c	d
e	f

FIGURES 5.2



a	b
c	d
e	f

FIGURES 5.3



a	b
c	d
e	f

FIGURES 5.4



a	b
c	d

FIGS 5.5 MAID OF THE MIST LEGEND



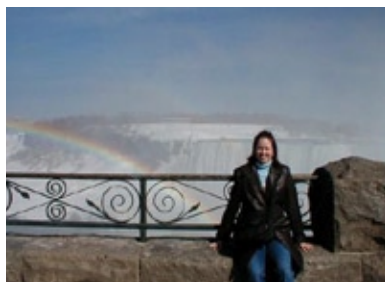
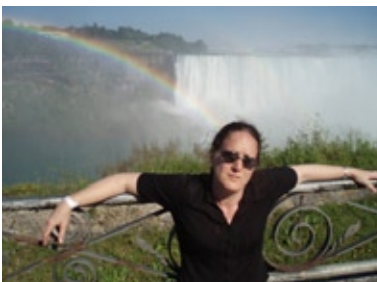
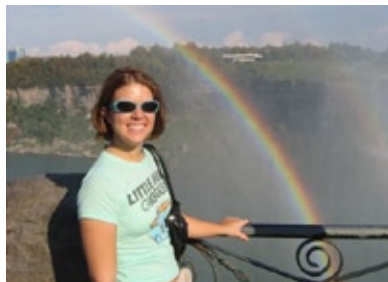
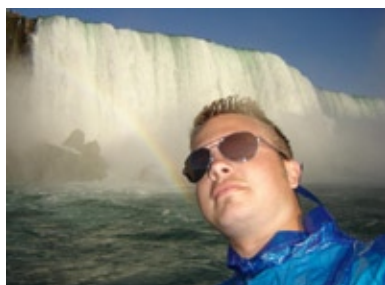
a	b
c	d

FIGS 5.6 MAID OF THE MIST LEGEND



FIG 5.7 STUDIO PORTRAIT OF MEN WITH SWANS, 1916

TWENTYONE RAINBOWS
AND THREE
OVERCAST DAYS



a	b	c
d	e	f
g	h	i
j	k	l

FIGURES 6.1



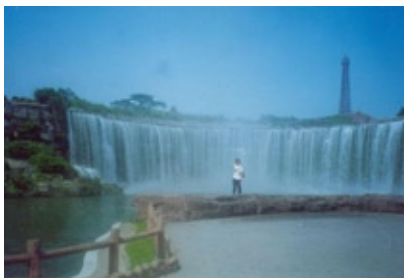
a	b	c
d	e	f
g	h	i
j	k	l

FIGURES 6.2



FIG 6.3 PAN-AMERICAN EXPOSITION POSTER

1 : 1 5
S H E N Z H E N



a	b	c
d	e	f
g	h	i

FIGS 7.1 WINDOW TO THE WORLD THEME PARK, SHENZHEN, CHINA



a	b	c
d	e	f
g	h	i

FIGS 7.2 WINDOW TO THE WORLD THEME PARK, SHENZHEN, CHINA



FIG 7.3 'THE CAROLINE STEAM BOAT PRECIPITATED OVER THE FALLS OF NIAGARA'
COLOURED ENGRAVING, C. 1838

HORSESHOE FALLS

What is vertigo? Fear of falling? Then why do we feel it even when the observation tower comes equipped with a sturdy handrail? No, vertigo is something other than the fear of falling. It is the voice of emptiness below us which tempts and lures us, it is the desire to fall, against which, terrified, we defend ourselves.

Milan Kundera
The Unbearable Lightness of Being

It flows so tranquilly, is so unimpatient of the mighty plunge, that it woos and woos you to lay down your head upon its breast and slide into dreamless sleep.

George William Curtis
Lotus-Eating: A Summer Book (1852)

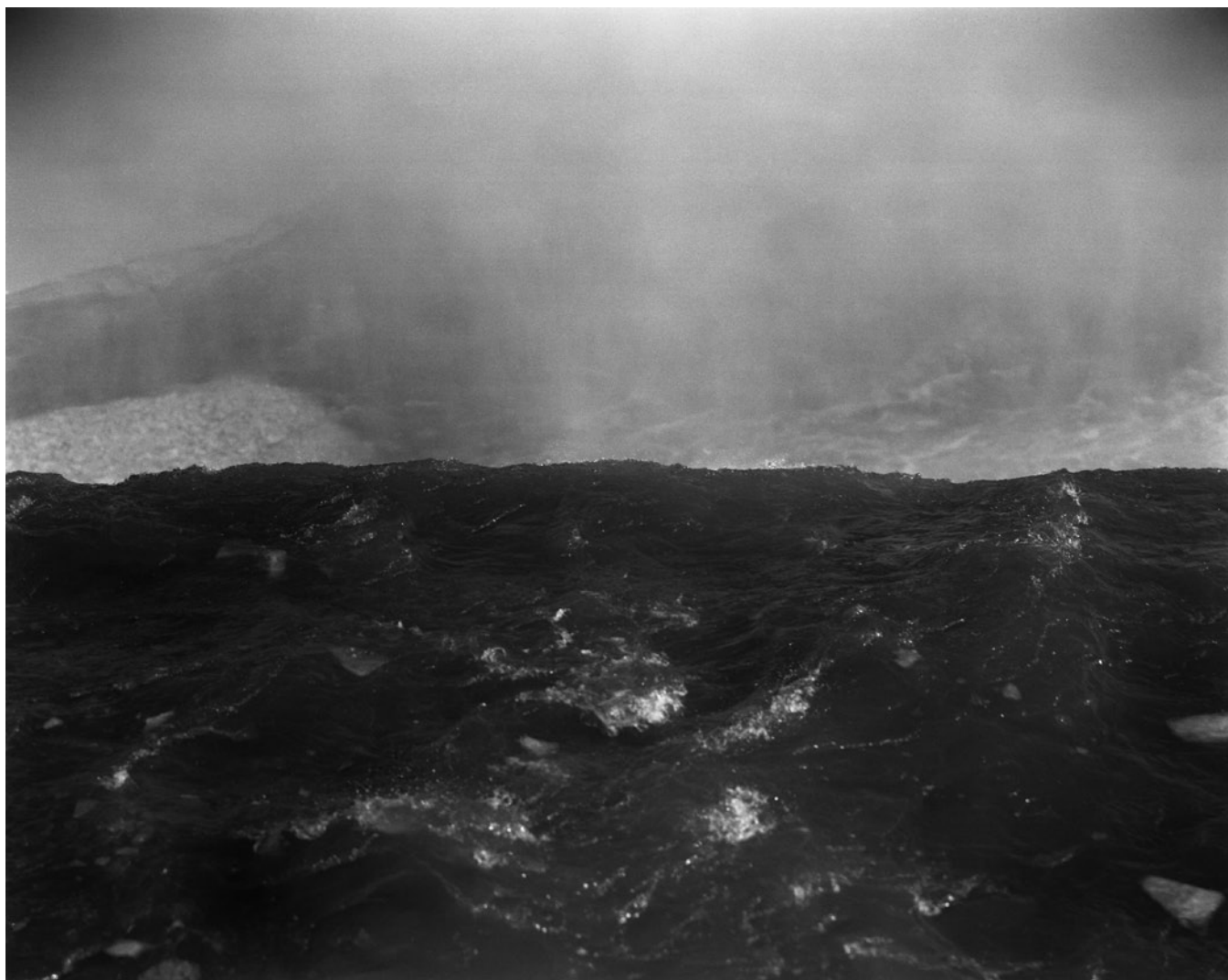


PLATE 2



PLATE 3



PLATE 4



PLATE 5



PLATE 6



PLATE 7



PLATE 8



PLATE 9



PLATE 10



fig. 8.1

SUICIDE TOURISM

Every year an estimated thirty people end their life at Niagara Falls. Only the Golden Gate Bridge claims more victims. The violent currents and the depth at the base of the falls can hold a drowned body for days, while some never reappear. Niagara's reputation as a suicide destination was well established in the nineteenth century. Writers such as Harriot Beecher Stowe described the irresistible allure of the cataract as a kind of fascination mingled with dread, evoking the romantic image of a "beautiful death." Local historian Paul Gromosiak has noted that since records began in the 1850s as many as 2800 suicide attempts have occurred here.

According to a report by the World Health Organization the number of suicides in Canada averages 3500, or one person every twenty-four minutes. The most recent reported attempt at the falls was on March 11th, 2009, when a man climbed over the railing on the Canadian side and threw himself into the water a few meters above the brink. He was plucked from the river downstream after surviving the plunge and later on arrested.

TORONTO POWER
GENERATING STATION



FIG 9.1 UPPER NIAGARA RAPIDS AND TORONTO POWER HOUSE, c.1920



fig. 9.2 During construction, c.1905

TORONTO POWER HOUSE

At the time of its completion in 1910 the Toronto Power Generating Station (or Power House) was already considered by some "the high point of industrial architecture in North America." The architect, Edward J. Lennox, better known for Toronto Old City Hall and Casa Loma, was hired to come up with a design that would reflect the ambitions of the stakeholders as well as fulfill the functional requirements for an completely new type of building—the hydroelectric power station. Understanding the importance of conveying confidence to a public that was only beginning to reap the benefits of cheap electricity, Lennox adopted a neoclassical language for the building's exterior, reminiscent of a Renaissance palace. On the interior, however, where the actual work was done, he chose a plain, purely functional aesthetic. Thus, by stylistic contrast the architect combined late nineteenth-century technological positivism with the desire to embody an image of humanistic idealism.

Located half a kilometre upriver of the falls, the power station has lain dormant for over thirty years. In 2007, remediative work was undertaken to prepare the empty building for redevelopment. The equipment in the machine hall was dismantled and the steel from the giant turbines recycled. The long trench in the inner forebay was sealed off and filled in with concrete. Many ideas regarding the possible reuse of the power station have been considered, but as of today its future remains undecided.



PLATE 11
ENTRANCE ROTUNDA



PLATE 12
OFFICE INTERIOR



PLATE 13
DETAIL OF FIREPLACE



PLATE 14
OFFICE INTERIOR



PLATE 15
OFFICE INTERIOR



PLATE 16
DETAIL OF DOORS



PLATE 17
CONTROL ROOM

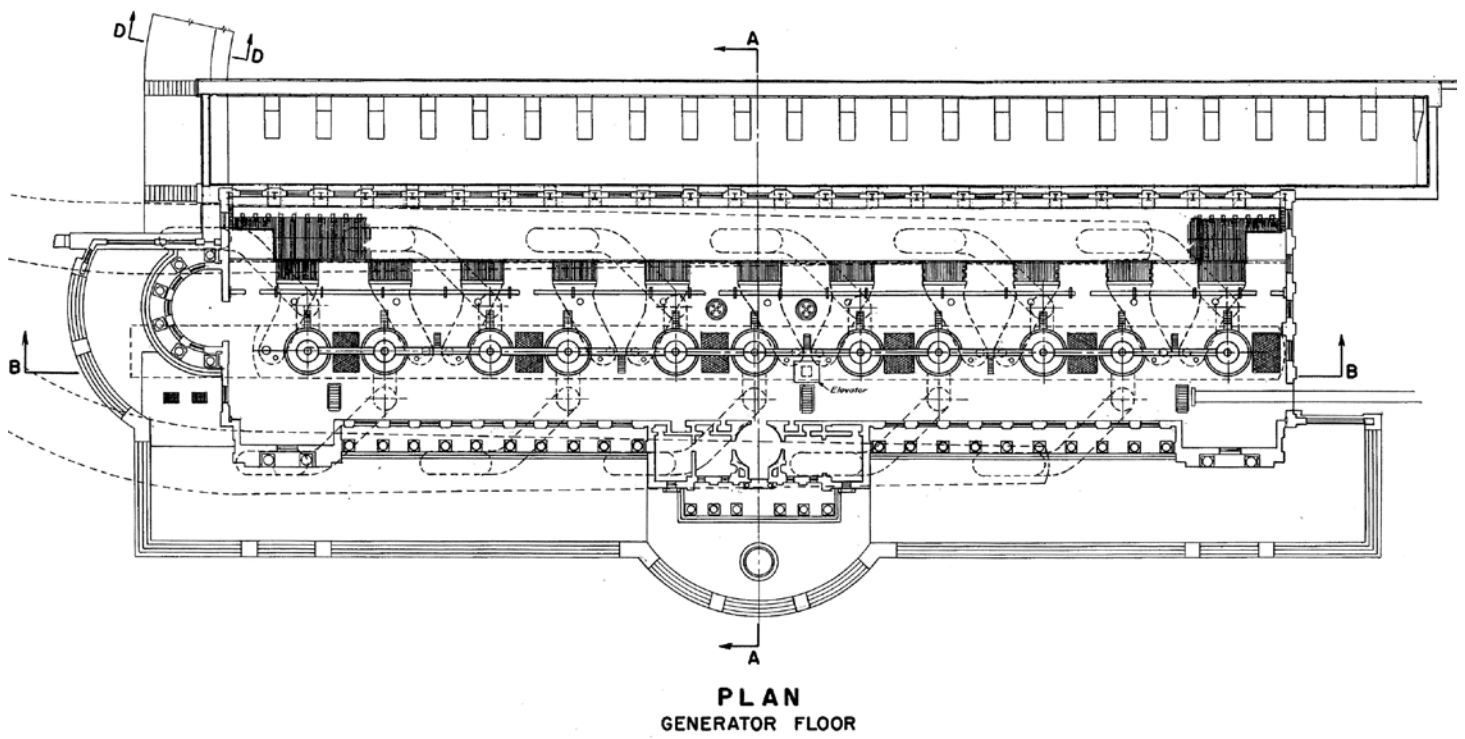


FIG 9.3 GENERATOR FLOOR PLAN

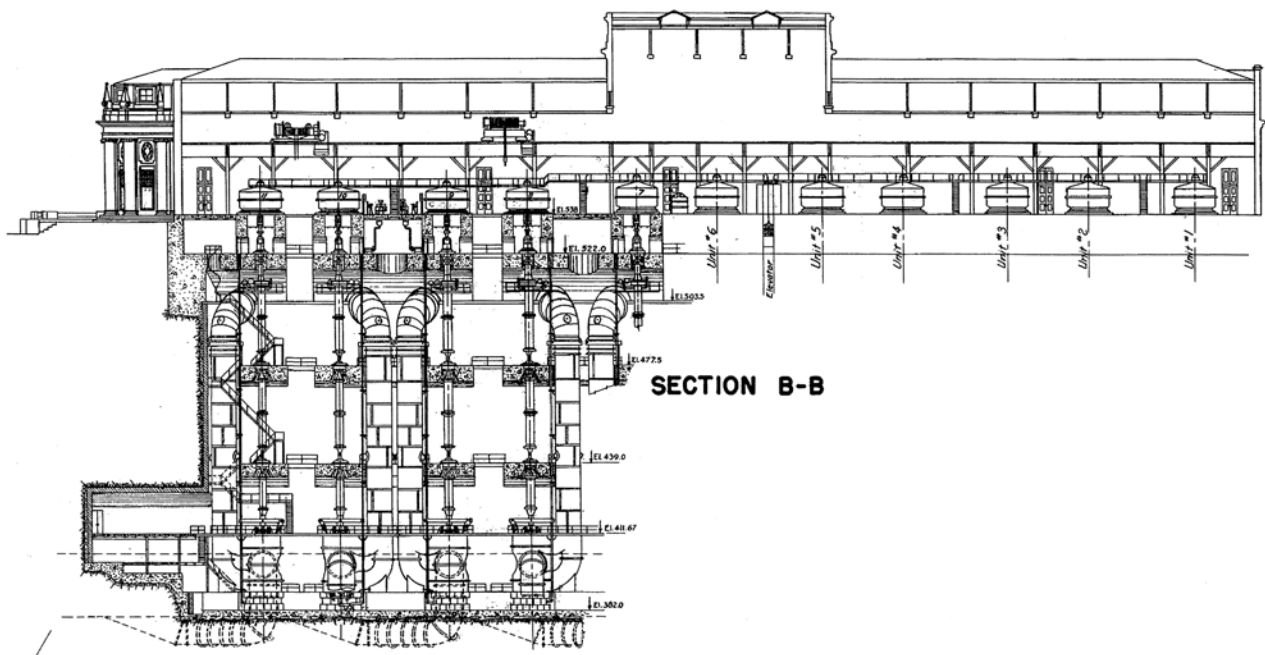
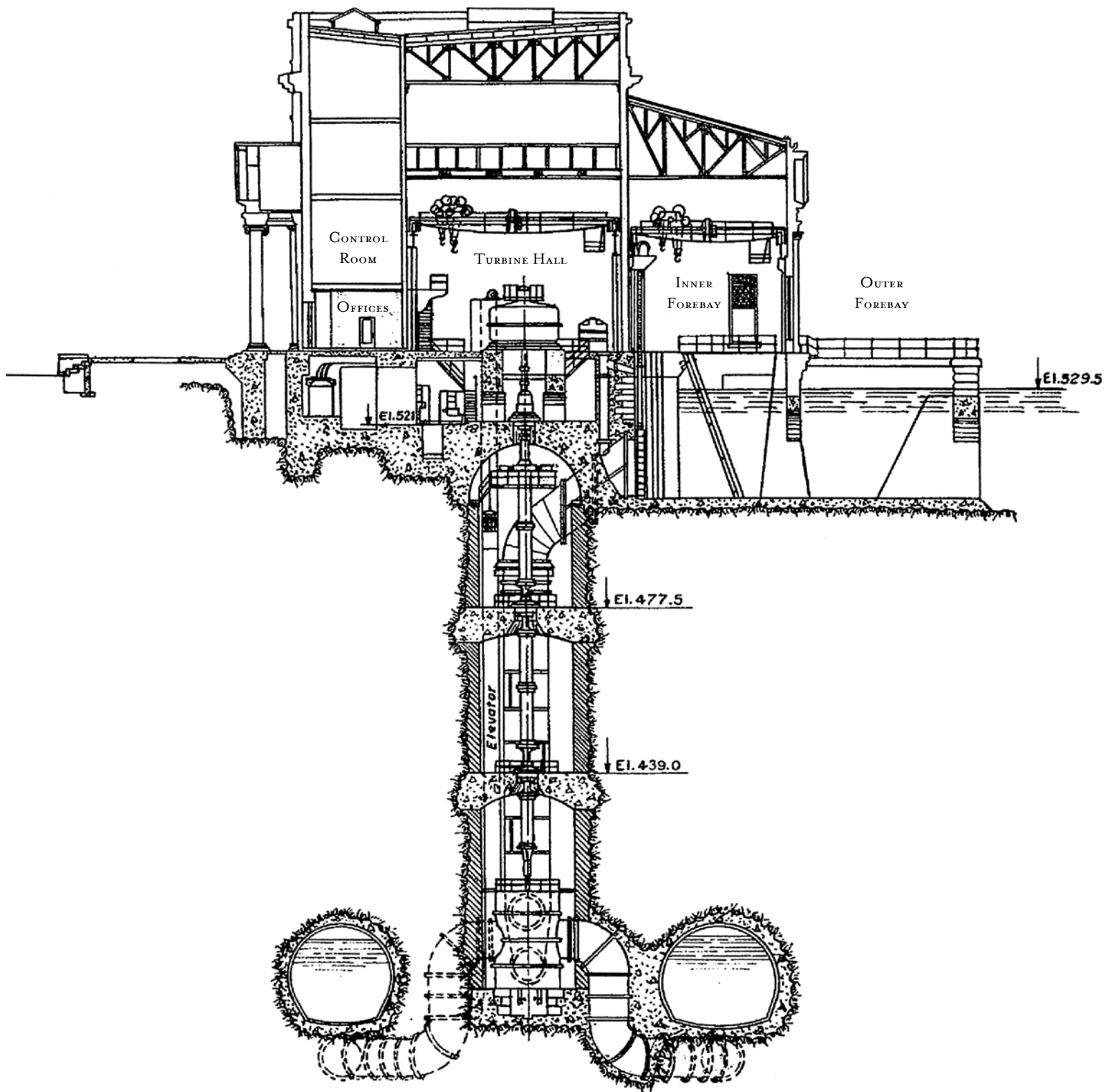


FIG 9.4 SECTION B-B



SECTION A-A

FIG 9.5 SECTION A-A



PLATE 18
TURBINE HALL



PLATE 19
GENERATOR FOUNDATION 5



PLATE 20
GENERATOR FOUNDATION 4



PLATE 21
GENERATOR FOUNDATION 9



PLATE 22
GENERATOR FOUNDATION 8



PLATE 23
GENERATOR FOUNDATION 3



PLATE 24
GENERATOR FOUNDATION 10



PLATE 25
INNER FOREBAY, LOOKING EAST



PLATE 26
INNER FOREBAY, LOOKING WEST

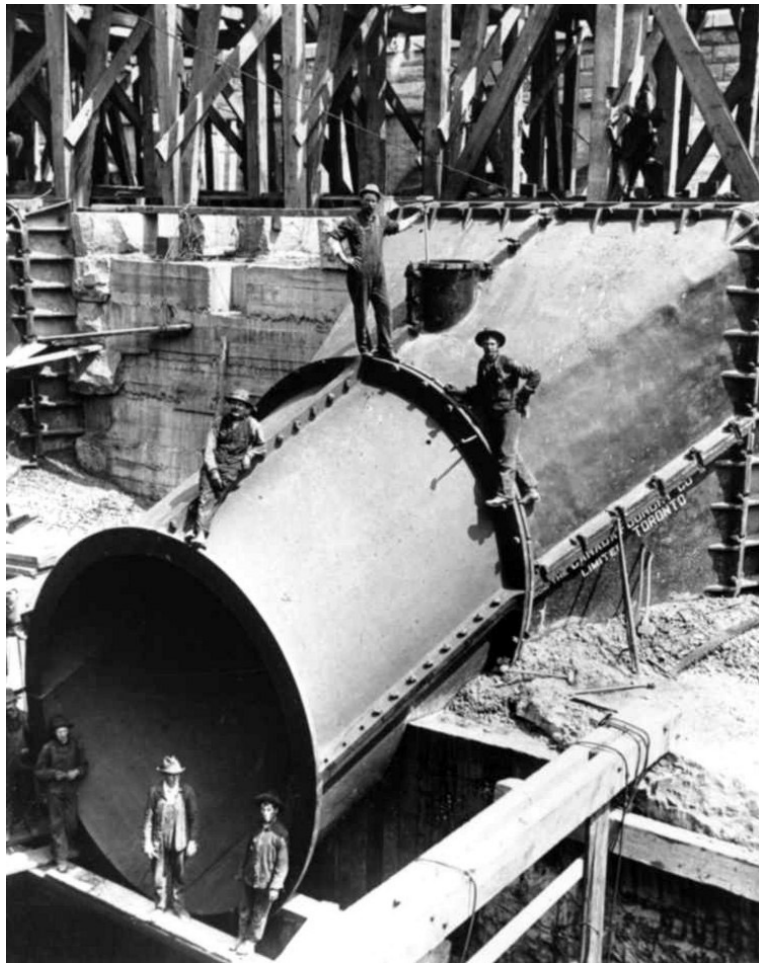


FIG 9.6 INTAKE PIPE FOR THE TORONTO POWER HOUSE, 1905

ECHOTA



fig. 10.1 A street in Echota, 1894

ECHOTA

By the end of the 19th century, Niagara Falls was an emerging industrial giant. The Mill District, which extended along the Niagara River contained well over two hundred plants and factories of every type. During the construction of the Adams Power Station, No. 1 (1891-1895), the Niagara Falls Power Company responded to the need for better living conditions for workers by building a residential community on a flat parcel of reclaimed swampland.

Echota, according to Budgett Meakin, was "a small but tasteful experiment in industrial housing" in Niagara Falls, New York. It was "...a complete village, with a hotel, a store for general provisions, a fire department, and a railroad station." (Irwin 149) Sixty-seven homes, enough for 112 families to live, were built north of Buffalo Avenue and west of Sugar Street (now Hyde Park Blvd) on a grid plan that was given street names 'A' through 'G.' What was unusual about this model workers' village at the time was the decision to hire prominent New York architects McKim, Meade & White to design the buildings. Edward Dean Adams, the president of the power company, wanted Echota to serve, both functionally and aesthetically, as an example of working-class communities. Adams named it himself, after a Cherokee word loosely translated as "refuge."

Although only "a shadow of what it once was," today Echota is a small working-class neighbourhood close to the factories on Buffalo Avenue, also known as chemical alley. Several of Stanford White's original shingle-style houses still stand beside prefabricated bungalows added in the postwar years. The subdivision has been nominated for the National Registry for Historic Places.



fig. 10.2 Original boundary line of Echota.



"An ideal healthful village"

FIG 10.3 VIEW OF B STREET ACROSS SUGAR STREET (HYDE PARK BLVD), 1907

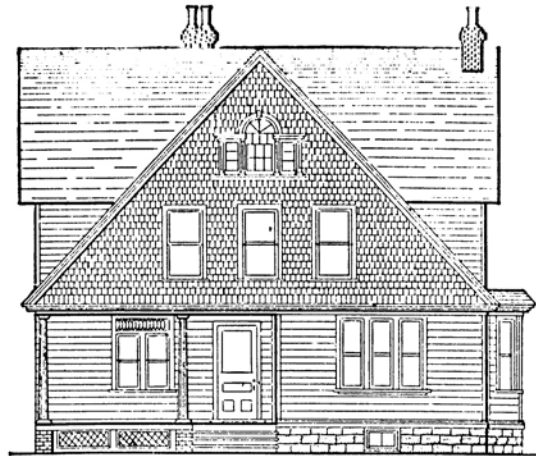


PLATE 27

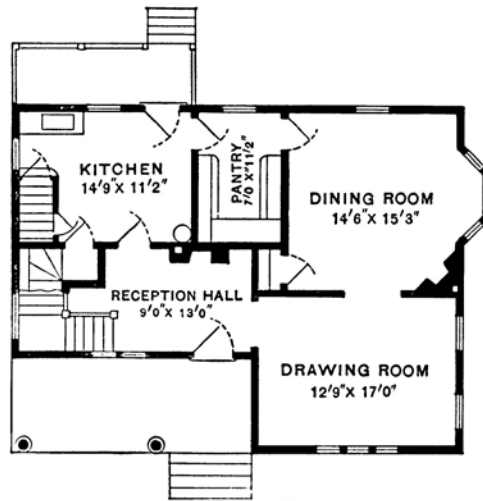
VIEW OF B STREET (LOOKING EAST TOWARD HYDE PARK BLVD), 2008



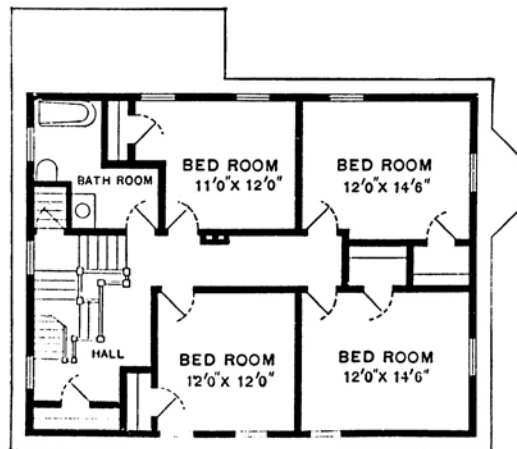
In anticipation of the Pan-American Exposition of 1901 the houses of Echota were given a new colour scheme designed by the architect Stanford White. Emerald green, a reference to the Niagara River's natural colour, came to symbolize technological innovation and industrial progress, and covered many of the Expo's venues. Although dilapidated, this house retains traces of White's comprehensive colour scheme, which proved so popular that Echota became an unofficial stopover enroute to the events in Buffalo.



FRONT ELEVATION.



FIRST FLOOR.



SECOND FLOOR.

FIG. 10.4 PLANS AND ELEVATION OF A SINGLE-FAMILY HOUSE DESIGNED BY STANFORD WHITE



PLATE 29
ROW HOUSE ON B STREET

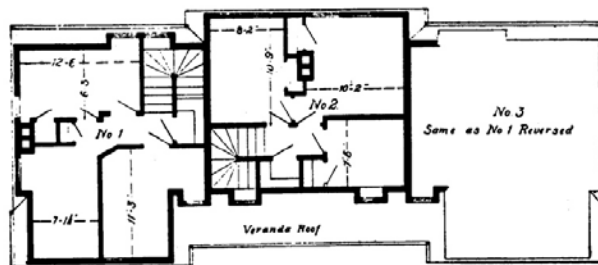
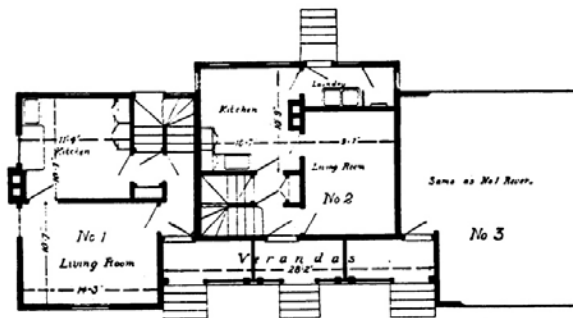


FIG. 10.5 PLANS AND ELEVATION OF A TRIPLEX ROW HOUSE DESIGNED BY STANFORD WHITE



PLATE 30
HOUSE ON A STREET



PLATE 31
ROW HOUSE ON A STREET



PLATE 32
HOUSE ON A STREET



PLATE 33
HOUSE ON B STREET



PLATE 34
HOUSE ON C STREET



PLATE 35
HOUSE ON C STREET



PLATE 36
MANHOLE COVER



PLATE 37
HOUSE ON D STREET



PLATE 38
HOUSE ON D STREET



PLATE 39
HOUSE ON D STREET



PLATE 40
OPEN FIELD NEXT TO G STREET

EVERY BUILDING
ON QUEEN STREET

QUEEN STREET - NORTH SIDE



VICTORIA AVE.

4759

4741

VICTORIA AVE.

4786

4770

4760



QUEEN STREET - SOUTH SIDE



4729

BUCKLEY AVE.

4709

4707

4703

4687

4685

4683

4681

4675

4671

4665

VALLEY WAY

4670 4672 4680

4664





4661 4657 ST. LAWRENCE AVE. 4635 4613 4605 4597



4658 ST. LAWRENCE AVE. 4640 4614 4608 4606 4600



4593

4573

CHRYSLER AVE.

4555

4547

4541

4535

4529

4525

4572

CHRYSLER AVE.

4554

4548

4546

4544

4536

4534





4523 4521 4519 4515 4511 4507 4501 4497

ST. CLAIR AVE.

4463

ST. CLAIR AVE.

4448 4450 4452





4437

4421

4413

4407

4397

4387

4394 4400 4410 4412 4414 4416 4424 4426 4430 4434 4436 4438 4440





ONTARIO AVE.

4365

4357

4355

4351

4349

4347

4345

4343

4337

4333

4327

4323

4321

4317

4313

ONTARIO AVE.

4342

4310

4300





4307

4299

ERIE AVE.

ERIE AVE.

ZIMMERMAN AVE.





ZIMMERMAN AVE.

RIVER RD.

RIVER RD.



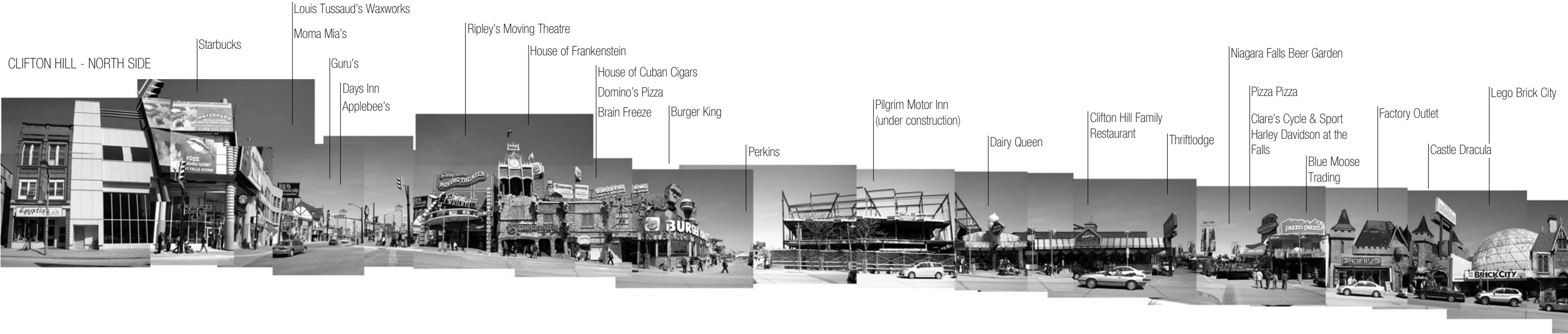
EVERY BUILDING
ON CLIFTON HILL



fig 12.1 Derelict buildings on Park Street, downtown.



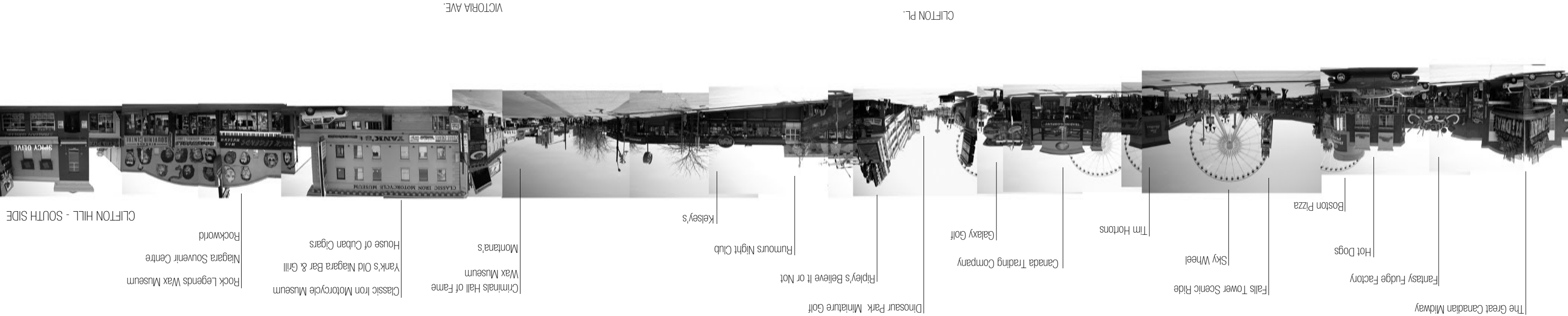
fig 12.2 Clifton Hill



CLIFTON HILL - NORTH SIDE

VICTORIA AVE.

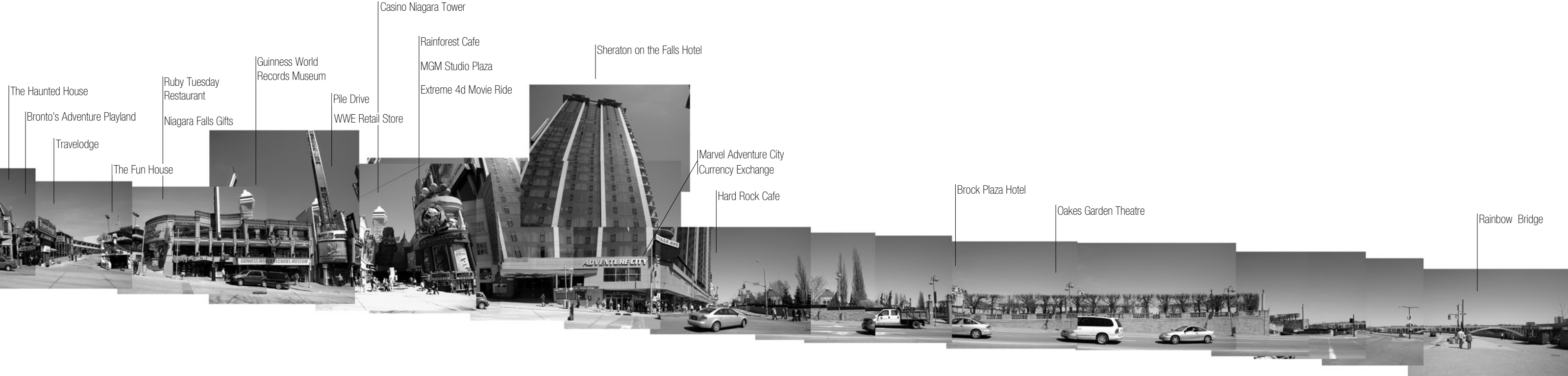
ONEIDA LN.



CLIFTON HILL - SOUTH SIDE

VICTORIA AVE.

CLIFTON PL.



FALLS AVE.

RIVER RD.



SENECA THEATRE

NIAGARA

In the summer of 1952, Niagara Falls became the dramatic backdrop for a major Hollywood film production. A crime-noir thriller directed by Henry Hathaway, and conceived in the style of Hitchcock, *Niagara* was the first starring role for a relatively unknown Marilyn Monroe. Shot on location around the city, word of the film attracted thousands of people who were eager to catch a glimpse of the actors at work.

Monroe, twenty-six years old, plays the femme fatale, Rose, the wife of an emotionally unstable war veteran. While on their vacation to Niagara, the coy yet darkly seductive siren plots to have her husband, George, murdered at the base of the falls by her lover—faking his death to look like an accident. But already suspecting something is wrong, George narrowly manages to evade his would-be killer, whereupon he becomes obsessed with revenge.

At its release the following year, headlines would openly compare the sexual allure of *Niagara*'s starlet to the destructive and limitless power of the iconic waterfall. One poster proclaimed: *Marilyn Monroe and Niagara: A raging torrent of emotion that even nature can't control!*

Niagara premiered on January 28th, 1953 at the Seneca Theatre.



fig. 13.1 film still from *Niagara*.



fig. 13.2 On the movie set, 1952.



SENECA THEATRE (OR CINEMAS)
 4624 Queen Street, Niagara Falls
 Orig. Owner: Famous Players
 Opened: c.1945
 Seats: 918
 Screens: 1
 Style: Art Deco
 Architect: Jay I. English

FIG 13.3 SENECA CINEMAS, c.1964



PLATE 43
SENECA THEATRE (DAY), 2008



PLATE 44
SENECA THEATRE (NIGHT), 2008



a	b
c	d

FIGS 13.4 MOVIE POSTERS



FIGS 13.5 MOVIE POSTERS

a	b
c	d



a	b
c	d

FIGS 13.6 MOVIE POSTERS



FIGS 13.7 MOVIE POSTERS

a	b
c	d



"What's your nickname?" I asked Marilyn.
Whitey volunteered, "We call her AC-DC."
"AC-DC?" I puzzled. "What's that mean?"
"I don't know," said Marilyn, with her most innocent look. "I thought it was
an electrical term."

- quoted in Jock Carroll, *Falling for Marilyn*, p.6

FIG 13.8 MARILYN MONROE POSING NEAR HORSESHOE FALLS, 1952

RIVERBOAT MOTEL



fig. 14.1

"Only minutes from the Falls and most attractions, the Riverboat motel offers clean, comfortable, refurnished rooms at budget prices."

I

I ARRIVE ON A MONDAY MORNING AS PLANNED. The weather forecast, which I've been watching closely, promises a streak of clear hot days, favourable conditions for the purpose of my visit. When I pull onto the U-shaped driveway, a typical feature of the privately run motels that dot the area, it is nearly eleven. Overhead a white sun speeds toward its azimuth.

II

I've stopped here before, twice in fact. But this is the one time I intend to stay over. At the front desk in a tiny office at the end of the long single-storey building, the owner appears. My palm poises above the silent bell. *Hello*. He's a middle-aged man wearing oval silver-rimmed glasses, brown skin, thin, and greying at the temples. He arches an eyebrow, recognizes me from last time. Is number ten free? I ask. He reaches under a glass countertop greasy with finger prints and brings up a binder whose edges are bent and worn.

Mm, how many nights?

Just one. How much?

Forty-five.

From the roadside the motel looks virtually deserted. I ask to see the room again because I want to be certain. Yes of course, he says. Tells me to go around and meet him at Room 10, then disappears behind a door. Unusually, every unit at this motel can be accessed from two sides, from an internal corridor which links them spine-like to the owner's private living space, and from outside where the tenants can come and go, anonymously, as they please. Two units down at no.12 a young man in a blue ball cap and eyes squinting in the sun nods to me. Nod in return. The owner swings open the screen door and waves me inside.

III

At first black. Out of the brightness of day and into the room's inky interior, unfocused shapes begin to emerge, slowly at first, like a photograph sloshing in a tray of old developer. The smell of wet cigarettes and strong cleaning chemicals fill my nostrils. I am almost sorry to be here. The owner parts the flower print curtains as a baroque bouquet of dust swirls in the yellow air.

Survey the furnishings: A collection of mostly mismatched formica-walnut pieces accented with the odd metallic trim; a wooden chair that has cracks in the centre of the red vinyl cushion; TV set in the corner, no remote; queen-size bed covered by a geometrical pattern of faded pastels; a framed poster of a mountain lake

landscape and the words “WONDERS OF NATURE” printed along the bottom; a wobbly floor fan that still runs, he explains, but doesn’t turn; all this enclosed by four walls decorated in a sickly pink textured wallpaper. The painted wainscoting behind the headboard reminds me of the colour of bruised plums. Welcome home.

IV

Motel rooms like this give the impression of having been suspended in time: a domestic time capsule from a bygone era that, somewhere along the way, forgot what it was suppose to remember. Apart from the thin veil of antique dust over everything, stains blooming sinisterly on the carpet, the cocktail of foul odours, and overwhelming aura of sorry neglect, the room is exactly what I’m looking for. Only one thing, though, can the bug screen be removed? I tell him I’m a photographer “doing an assignment” and that the view out the window has to be unobstructed. I’ll take the room if you can do that for me, I say. The owner agrees with a shrug, surely used to hearing stranger requests than mine. We return together to the office where I surrender my name and licence plate number. He dangles out the key and takes my money without a word.

V

Sounds of mating cicadas drown in the low magnetic hum of hydroelectric pylons in the adjoining field.



fig. 14.2

VI

After unloading my equipment from the trunk, I park at the far end of the lot where some chickens are pecking behind a rusting BMW. The young man in the ball cap is standing at his door smoking. He offers a crumpled packet as I walk by. We met a few weeks ago when I came here scouting for locations. No thanks, I say. There are reddish circles around his pale gray eyes, a deep tiredness, or something, etched in his face. He has lived at the Riverboat, the owner tells me, for two years.



fig. 14.3

"All rooms feature fridges and televisions."

VII

The Riverboat Motel is drydocked on the western fringes of the city of Niagara Falls, Ontario, at the end of a four kilometre stretch of paved road known as Lundy's Lane. Farther down it changes into Highway 20, which crosses the historic Welland Canal, then the rolling wine-growing fields of Welland County, passed a couple of public golf courses, and winding a path through several farming hamlets before terminating an hour or so later at Hamilton's outer suburbs. According to one source, Lundy's Lane once held the record for the highest concentration of motels in the world on a single street. This was during Niagara's postwar heyday when newly wed couples came here to honeymoon, back when it was the thing to do. While many of the older businesses still advertise special suites with heart-shaped whirlpools or 'luv tubs,' the choice of Niagara Falls as a destination for nuptial bliss has been in decline for decades. And it shows. Despite this fact, Lundy's Lane remains the city's

main commercial artery, and, for those who bother to drive out this far, serves as home to the unofficial redlight district.

Like the estimated ten million who visit Niagara every year, my stay will be a short one, my goal commonplace: to document the city in a photograph.

VIII

Standard amenities to expect at a budget motel include: two sets of neatly folded threadbare (formerly white, now off-white) towels, tiny bars of french-milled soap that tend to slip down the drain, hot water under low pressure, cold water under high pressure, scratched up glass tumblers and plastic ice bucket on a serving tray, basic cable and, if lucky, a plug-in kettle and coffee maker with complementary packets of tea, sugar, sugar substitute, whitener, and little stir sticks preserved in a clear cellophane wrapper. However, an open bag of hypodermic needles left by the room's former occupant is unusual.



fig. 14.4

IX

A thickening haze erases the sky as I start to unpack, setting things up. Because it's still early afternoon and the room faces west, against the late sun, there's no hurry. I decide to make two photographs: one today, when objects are silhouetted, and a second one in the morning, when the angled light from the south will render

forms more distinct. The owner comes back with a cordless drill, and pulls off the flimsy bug screen that covers the window. Through the clear glass I can picture in my mind the final effect—the superimposed image created by the camera obscura.

X

TOOLS

flashlight
screwdriver
tape measure
utility knife, scissors
black studio paper
black poly 9mil vapour barrier
painters tape, electricians tape, duct tape
set of 10 homemade pinholes (3/4" to 1/4")
glass cleaner, paper towel
wristwatch with timer
notepad and pen
magnifying glass
camera system
cable release
tripod
film

OTHER

overnight bag
something to eat
something to drink
portable radio
alarm clock
book

XI

In principle it couldn't be simpler. *Camera obscura* is a latin term meaning *dark chamber* and refers historically to a portable device used by Renaissance painters to draw scenes in correct perspective. The term also describes any room or enclosed space that can be made dark by blocking out all the windows while allowing only a single point of light (the pinhole) to enter from outside. By a natural phenomenon recorded by a Chinese philosopher in the third century BC, and by Aristotle at around the same time, the light which passes through an aperture on one side of the room, projects an exact, if dimmer, image of the external world onto the opposite wall. A "living mural," as some have said to convey its uncannily cinematic effect. Unaided by any optical lens the projected image of the landscape enters the space flipped upside-down and backwards, and so resembles taking a picture with a pinhole camera, the kind one might have made as a kid out of an empty coffee can and some black paint. I've come to Niagara Falls to transform this motel room, and other one like it, into an inhabitable pinhole camera.

XII

Matching pairs of white deck chairs outside every room, in keeping with the motel's nautical theme.



fig. 14.5

"Situated in a park-like setting, we cater to your holiday enjoyment with a playground, picnic area and BBQ."

XIII

Looking out of the window I mentally note the main features in the landscape: dead tree trunks, electrical towers, truck stop in the distance, grass field, open sky. Turning around to scan the interior I visually gauge where the objects will likely fall. I tape one of the homemade pinholes (a square of cardboard supporting a piece of hobby tin which has a hole drilled in it) onto the glass. Half-inch diameter ought to do. I'll adjust its position once or twice until I'm satisfied with the result. Next goes on the plastic. For the camera obscura effect to be visible to the naked eye, all sources of stray light must be blocked out.



fig. 14.6

"We're just minutes from several shopping plazas, drive in theatres, welland canal centre, and many local golf courses."

XIV

On top of the bed I lay down some of the black plastic sheeting sourced at a home renovation centre which came on a twelve-foot roll. I measure the window then cut the sheet to size, adding extra material so it fits well over the entire frame. Grabbing painters tape I step up on the chair and begin attaching the sheet to the wall, securing the top first, then moving down the sides. An hour passes. After reinforcing all the corners and double-taping the edges I take several long strips and seal the leak around the door and air conditioning box. When I'm confident that the camera is sufficiently *obscure* I take a blade and slice a small square flap into the plastic

to reveal the cardboard behind. A last bit of electricians tape, making sure to leave only the pinhole exposed, and it's ready. Reach for the light switch.



fig. 14.7

XV

Guided by touch alone, I find the chair and gaze into the fresh darkness. Pupils dilate against a fathomless void. Over my shoulder the point of light in the window pierces the black space, a remote star. Familiar outlines materialize one by one. The foot of the bed in front of me, the empty dresser (with drug needles) by the corner, the floor fan standing sentinel a few feet away to the left, the closet door to the right. A satin braided clothes hanger hovers off the handle like some hieroglyphic bird.

Uneven shadowy patches float on the wall and ceiling. They suggest ancient stains caused by flood damage, except that I don't recall seeing marks there while the lights were on. Eyes search further, trying but failing to focus on the colourless shapes. They appear to be coming from somewhere else, beyond the confines of the room itself. If it's true they must belong to the spectral image emanating from the pinhole. I hold a hand in front of the bright circle to confirm my suspicion. A concentrated sun. Sure enough, there it is, albeit blurry and distorted—the inverted world of the camera obscura.

XVI

Flip on the lights. In the corner of the room by the door I mount my camera onto a tripod and focus it on the far wall. The goal is to capture the phenomenon in a single photograph, to document the double image of the landscape overlapping the interior. To photograph a photograph. Switch off the lights, then back on a moment later, making adjustments to the composition, repeating this step until it's just right. I reposition the pinhole lower on the window to allow the figure of the tower to spill over the bed. I fold down the bed spread to expose plain white sheets, the taut surface now a makeshift projection screen.

Glancing at my watch, I estimate three hours of sun remain in the day, enough to make one photograph. I carefully check the camera again, set the timer on my watch, turn off the lights and, holding my breath, trip open the shutter.

XVII

Enter the underwater chamber. Sinking to a depth until you can't tell up from down, which way you came from. A submarine theatre where the boundary between night and day, illusion and reality, the tangible and intangible, dissolve. I lean back in the chair getting more comfortable, safely outside the camera frame. Minding the time. Watching.

XVIII

Images unravel in unreal time. A minivan turns onto the motel's driveway. Gravel crunches under rolling tires as it crawls across the ceiling, a rubbery profile pulled and kneaded by anamorphosis. Quick shapes of seagulls now and then dart across the room. The steel frame of the electrical tower is a quivering lattice of criss-crossing angles melting over the bed. Daliesque.



fig. 14.8

XIX

On the wall above the wainscoting the gas station is in fuzzy outline. Transport trucks the size of paperbacks shuttle back and forth silently, while whispers of clouds drift at my feet. An ants parade of cars traveling down Lundy's Lane flickers and animates the side wall, the high sun glinting off windshields.

A door bangs shut. My neighbour steps outside for a smoke. I wish I could be there, standing in the daylight. A minute later the owner's voice. The two men are talking, disputing something about rent. Then I hear footsteps stop outside my room. A chimera suddenly looms, terrifyingly, on the far wall, a carnivalesque body and head! It's the owner with his face up close to the pinhole. Oh no, I think, I'm in for some trouble. Fortunately, he leaves after a few seconds, probably just wondering why the window is covered with plastic. Close call.

XX

Tired of sitting and needing a break, I sneak into the bathroom. Crossing into the camera frame doesn't affect the photograph as long as I don't stand still. At such low light levels it takes several minutes for a stationary objects to record on the film. That's why moving cars and people are normally invisible. Parked cars that drive away part way through a shot will sometimes leave a ghostly imprint, though. Similarly, a rising or setting sun will trace a luminous path over the floor and furniture, going from one side of the room to the other like a lazy welder's spark.

XXI

Flakes of old mirror stir by the sink as I wash my hands. Twist the squeaking faucet. A spider asleep beside the pink toilet. Black and white checker accents. In the shower stall a few chipped tiles are smiling a broken smile.



fig. 14.9

"Family owned and operated, we are open year-round to enjoy the four seasons in beautiful Niagara Falls, Ontario."

XXII

My watch beeps hour two. A feeling of isolation akin to cabin fever creeps over me. Switch on the radio which beams in signals from Buffalo: talk radio...new country...hits from the 80's...baseball game...static. I get up to stretch my legs, yawning. Then the unthinkable.

My left foot, extending into the dark, strikes something by the door. The object rattles and goes silent. Oh shit. The tripod. This can mean only one thing: that the camera has shifted. And even a small amount of movement will result in a double exposure, an unusable image. This is bad, really bad. Although I won't be able to confirm the damage until after the film is developed I can't suppress a hollow, sinking feeling deep inside my chest. Disappointment. The day is lost; all the waiting had been for nothing.

XXIII

But just then, out of the corner of my eye, the motel room brightens. Only by an increment, barely a match's flame, but definitely brighter. At the foot of the bed on the floor appears a bulb of brilliant gold. And it's on the move. It's the sun over the field! For the next half hour and for the remainder of the lost photograph, I watch fascinated as the miniature sun descends, upside-down, on the western horizon. A glowing coin slipping over white sheets. With each minute that passes the disappointment I felt moments before falls away, replaced instead by a quiet sense of wonder at being the sole witness to this timeless event unexpectedly made new again. This minor miracle.

Besides, I say to myself, I'll try again tomorrow.



FIG 14.10. 10, RIVERBOAT MOTEL, 27TH JUNE 2007.

CAMERA OBSCURA

In Plato's cave, there is no word to designate death, and no dream or image to intimate its unspeakableness. Death is there, in the cave, as excess, and forgetfully; it arrives from outside into the words of the philosopher as that which reduces him in advance to silence; or, it enters him the better to set him adrift in the futility of a semblance of immortality, making of him a mere shade, the perpetuation of shadow.

Maurice Blanchot, *Writing of the Disaster*



PLATE 45
10, RIVERBOAT MOTEL (HYDROELECTRIC CORRIDOR)

Dim eyes often see things before sharp eyes do.

Plato, *The Republic*, Book X.



PLATE 46
24, CADILLAC MOTEL



PLATE 47
202, FAIRWAY MOTOR INN, NO.1



PLATE 48
202, FAIRWAY MOTOR INN, NO.2 (SKYLON TOWER)



PLATE 49
711, DAYS INN, NO.2



PLATE 50
711, DAYS INN, NO.1



PLATE 51
351, CAIRN CROFT HOTEL, NO.1



PLATE 52
6, FALCON INN



PLATE 53

256, QUALITY INN, NO.2 (SKYWHEEL IN MOTION)



PLATE 54
256, QUALITY INN, NO.1 (SKYWHEEL)



PLATE 55
20, RIVERVIEW MOTEL, NO.2 (WITH SUNRISE)



PLATE 56
20, RIVERVIEW MOTEL, NO.1 (NIAGARA GORGE)

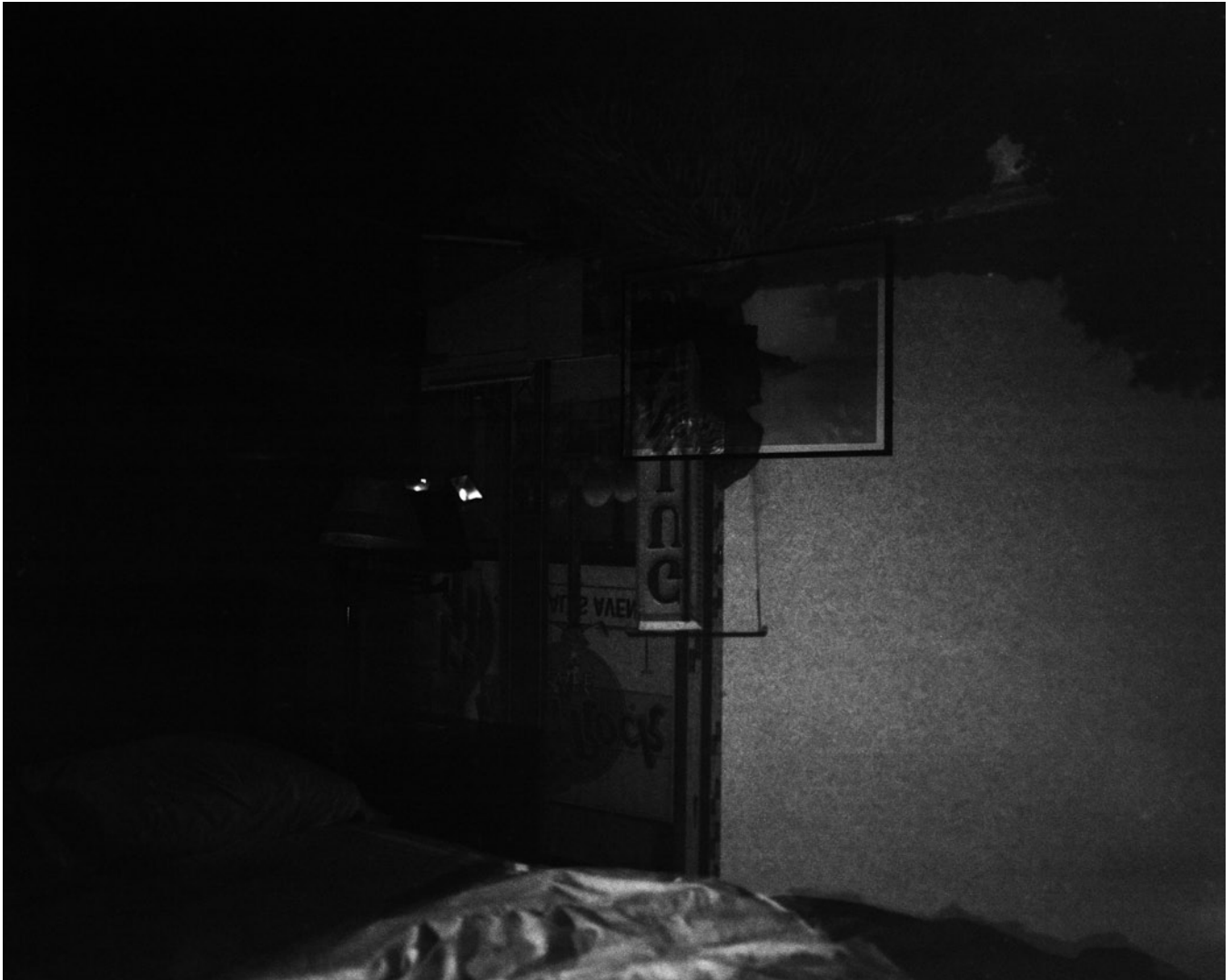


PLATE 57

58, THRIFTLODGE AT THE FALLS (CLIFTON HILL AND AMERICAN FALLS)

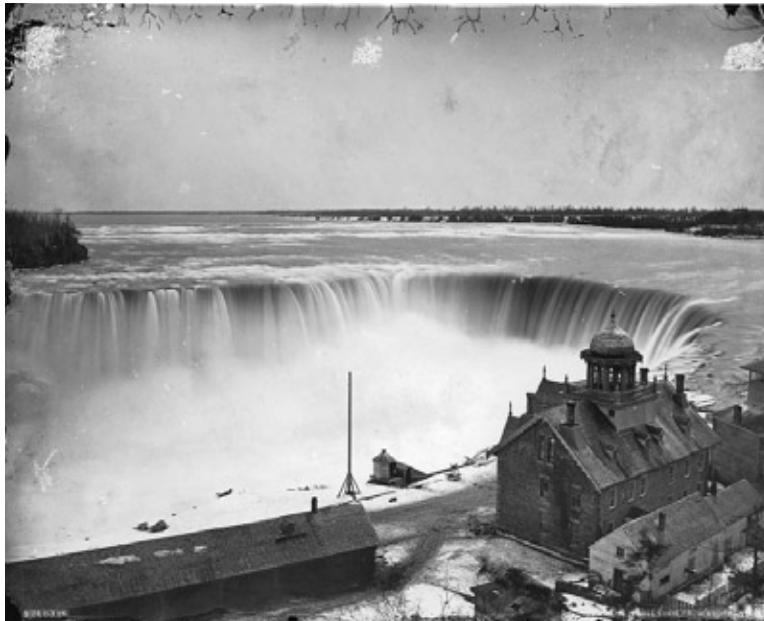


Table Rock House at right, with camera obscura pavilion in front

FIG 15.1 HORSESHOE FALLS FROM ABOVE, 1869
WILLIAM NOTMAN

LATE SHOW

(ONE HOUR PHOTOGRAPHS)

There is nothing more mysterious than a TV set left on in an empty room....It is as if another planet is communicating with you. Suddenly the TV reveals itself for what it really is: a video of another world, ultimately addressed to no one at all, delivering its images indifferently, indifferent to its own messages (you can easily imagine it still functioning after humanity has disappeared).

Jean Baudrillard, *Cool Towns: America*

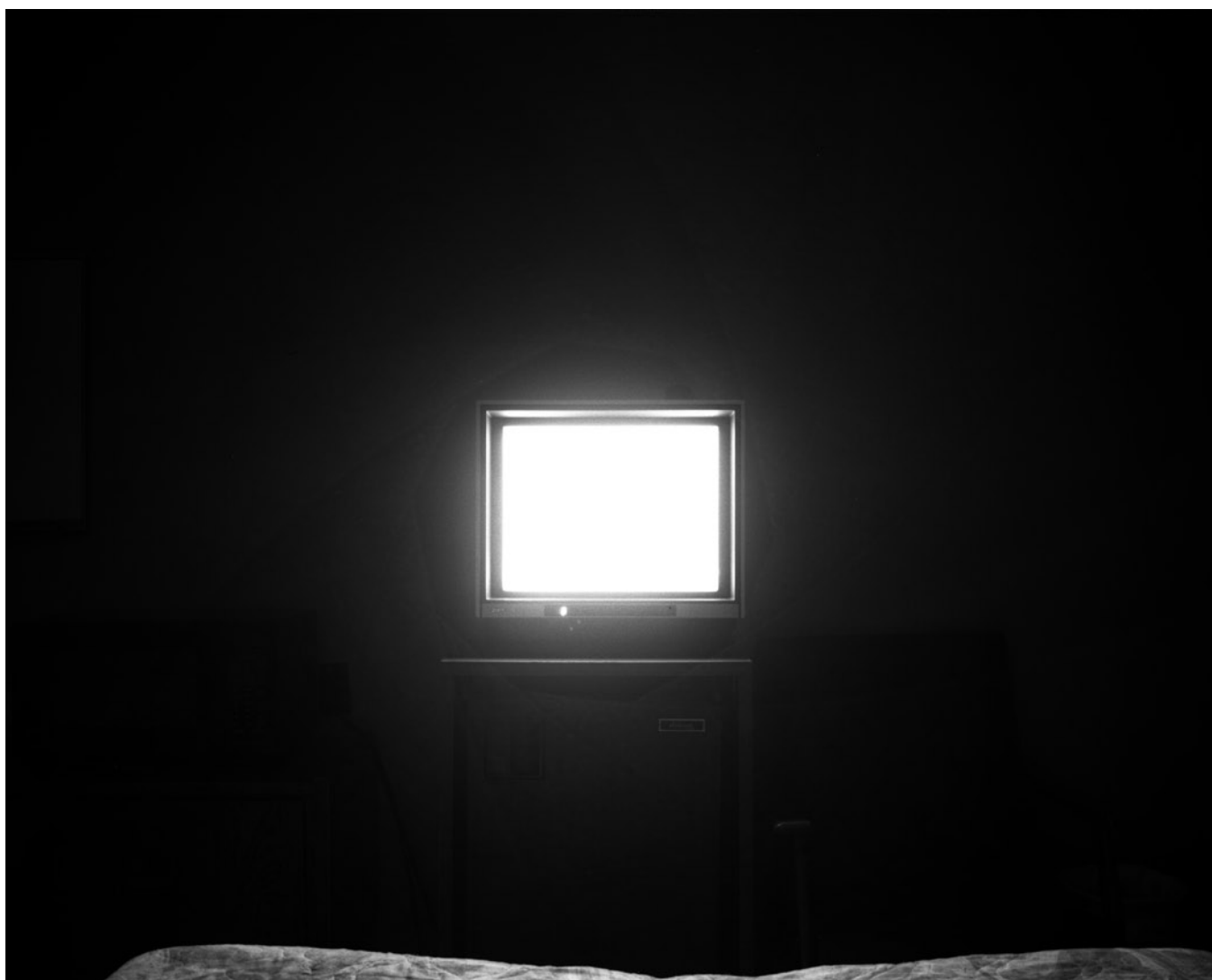


PLATE 58
CADILLAC MOTEL

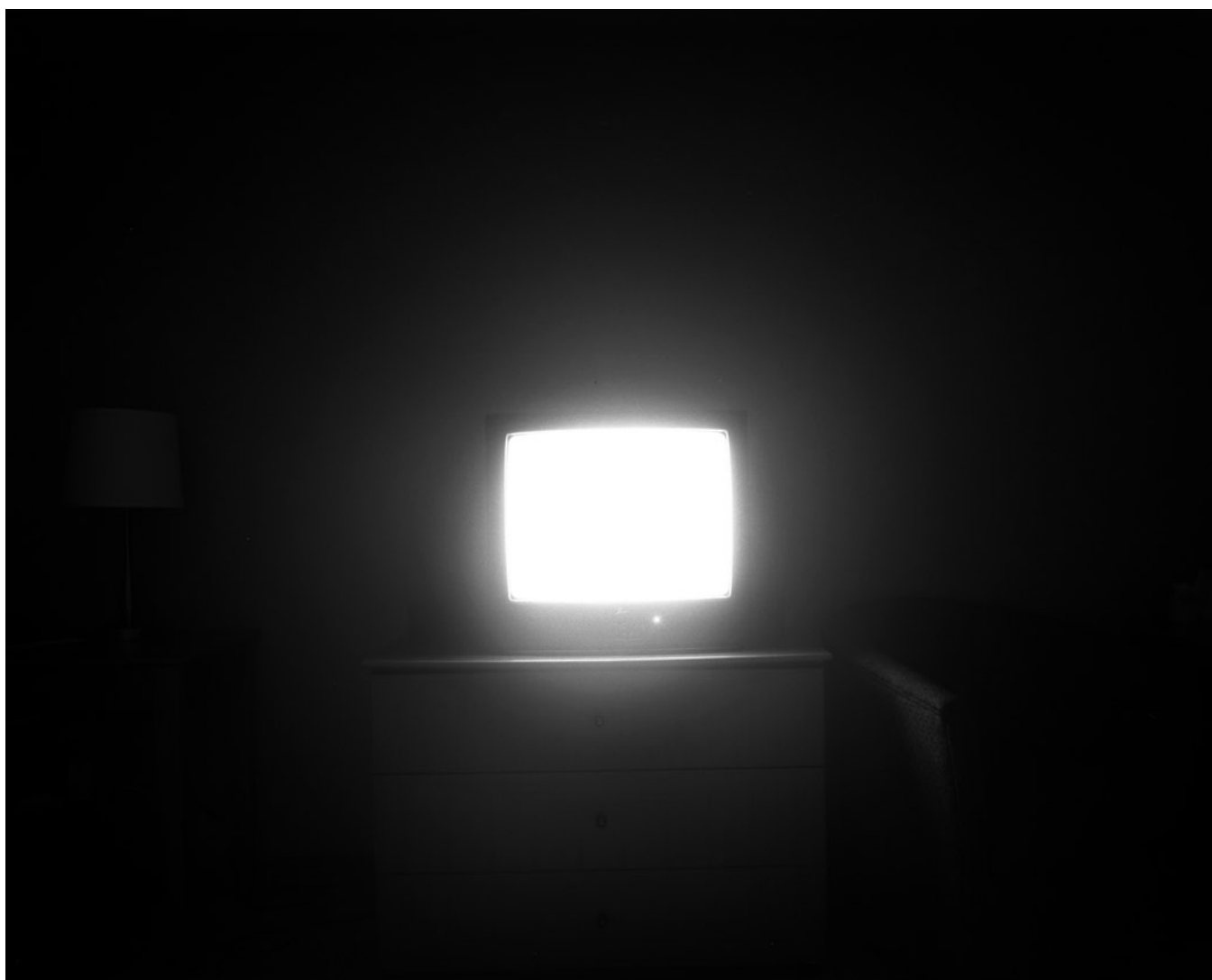


PLATE 59
DAYS INN



PLATE 60
FALCON INN



PLATE 61
FAIRWAY MOTOR INN



PLATE 62
RIVERVIEW MOTEL

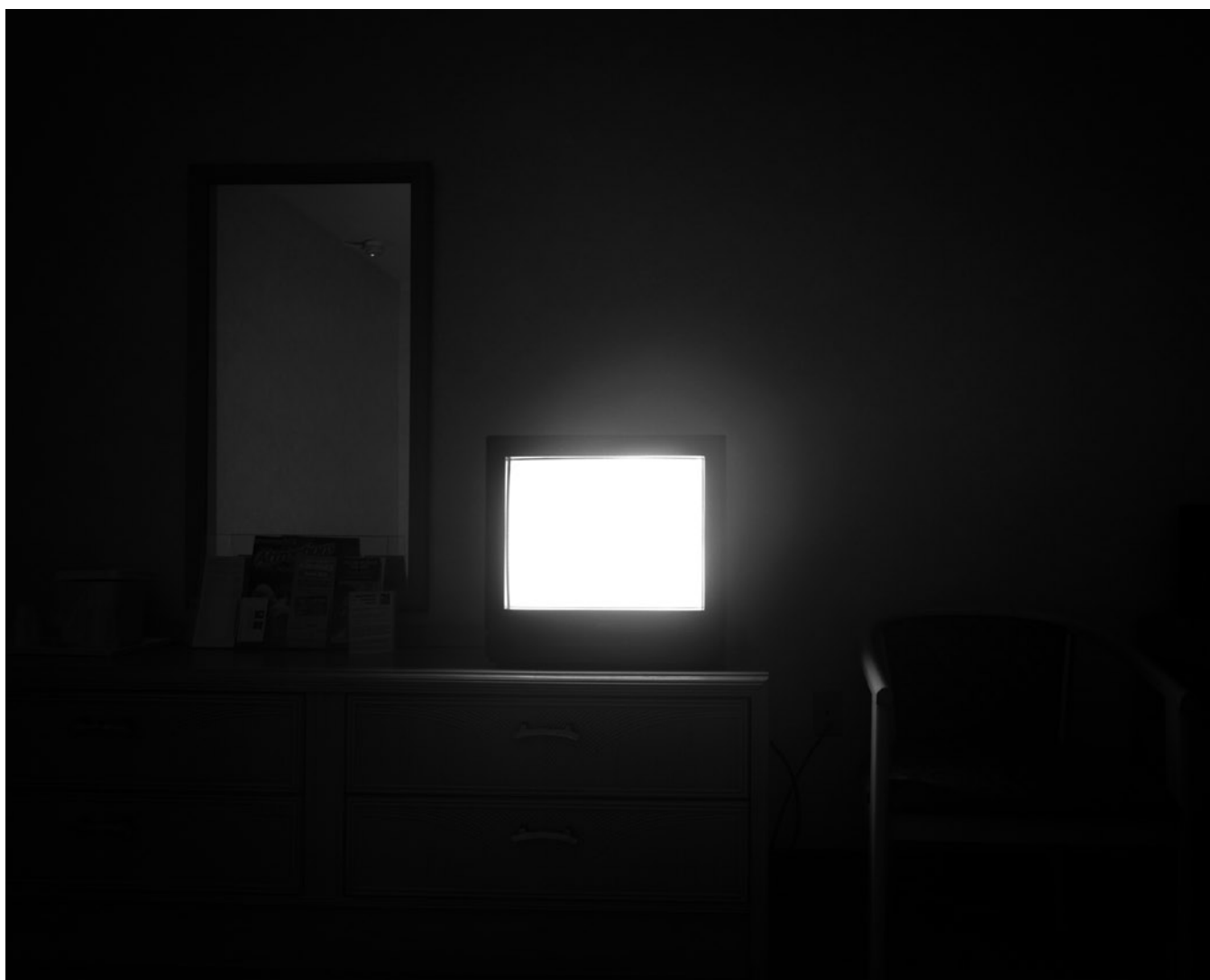


PLATE 63
QUALITY INN



PLATE 64
RIVERBOAT MOTEL NO. 1



PLATE 65
RIVERBOAT MOTEL No.2



PLATE 66
CAIRN CROFT HOTEL



PLATE 67
THRIFTLodge AT THE FALLS



FIG 16.1 VIEW OF NIAGARA FALLS IN MOONLIGHT, 1872
HERMAN HERZOG

SURVIVOR INN

Redemption looks to the small fissure in the ongoing catastrophe.

Walter Benjamin, *Central Park*



PLATE 70



PLATE 69



PLATE 70



PLATE 71



PLATE 72



PLATE 73



PLATE 74



FIG 17.1 NEAR SMITHVILLE

CANVIEW DRIVE IN



FIG 18.1



PLATE 75

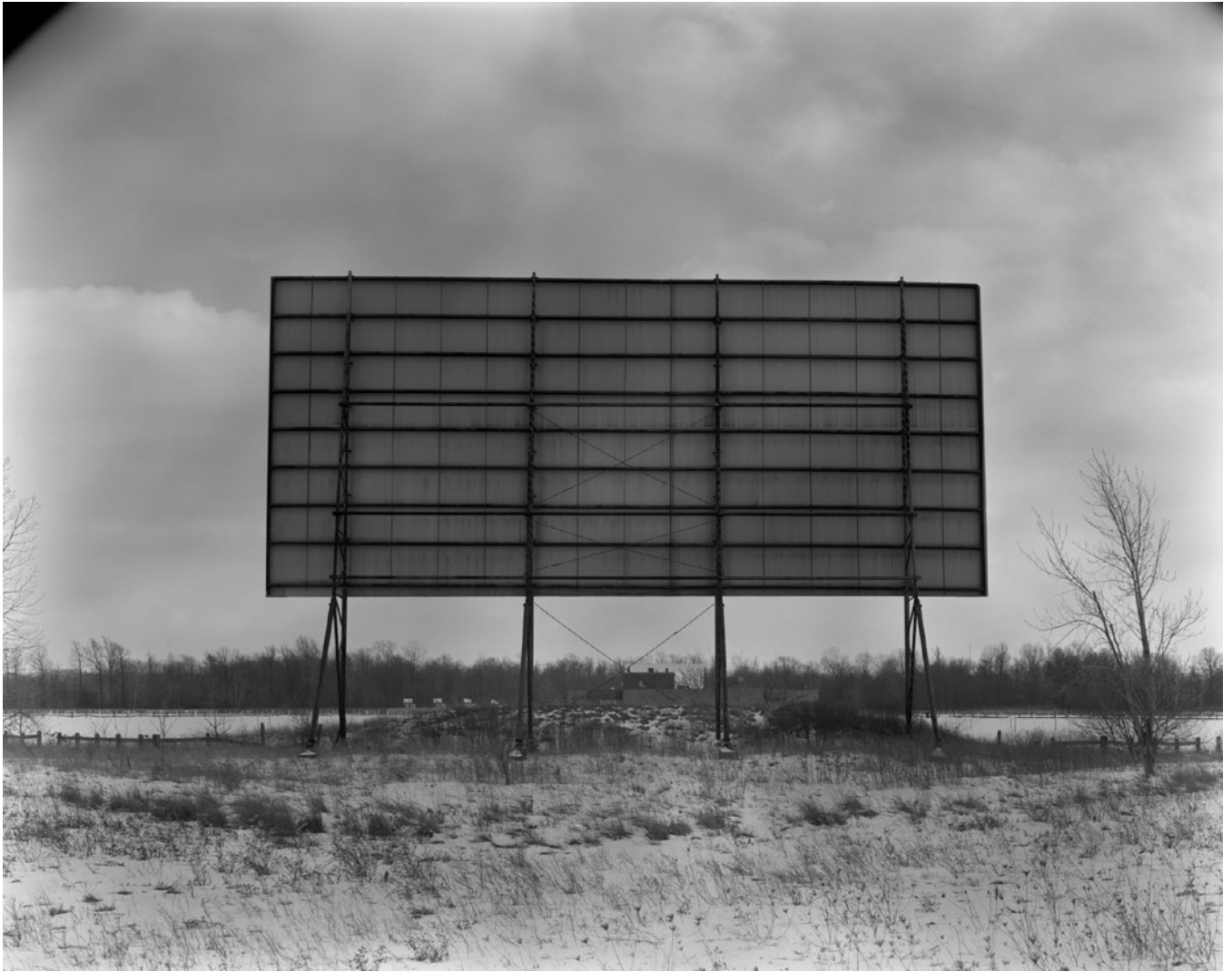


PLATE 76



PLATE 77



PLATE 78



PLATE 79



PLATE 80



PLATE 81



*146. Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster.
And when you look long into an abyss, the abyss also looks into you.*

Nietzsche, Beyond Good & Evil

FIG 18.2 VENDING MACHINES IN QUEEN VICTORIA PARK

LOVE CANAL

In 1978 a working class neighbourhood of Niagara Falls, New York, became the site of one of the worst environmental disasters in modern history.



fig. 19.1



fig. 19.2 Aerial view of the Love Canal site, c.1970

LOVE CANAL

Named after the flamboyant 19th century landowner and entrepreneur William T. Love, Love Canal was a small postwar residential community built on the remainder of an ambitious but ultimately failed utopian scheme. In the 1890s Love envisioned an industrial metropolis powered by an eleven kilometer long shipping channel that connected the lower and upper Niagara River. Up to one million people would live and work in his *Model City*, "designed to be the most perfect city in existence," he claimed. Factories would establish themselves along the channel, attracted by the promise of cheap and plentiful electricity. Having outstripped all previous schemes in both scale and grandiosity, Love asserted with pride: "Nothing approaching it in magnitude, perfection or power has ever before been attempted." (McGreevy 120) However, Love's dream came to an abrupt end when an economic recession scared away investors, and Tesla's alternating current technology revolutionized methods for transmitting electricity over long distances. By the time Love's company went bankrupt only a few buildings and a short section of the canal had been completed.



fig. 19.3 Aerial view of the Love Canal site, c.1970

The partial canal, a 3,200-foot-long pit, remained abandoned until 1920 when it was purchased by the city of Niagara Falls. For years, local residents used the canal for recreational activities such as swimming in the summer and skating in the winter. As the city expanded east, spurred on by rapid industrial growth, it was decided the pit would be used as a dumping ground for the city and the U.S. military, a practice that continued for the next twenty years. Eventually the pit and its contents were sold off to the Hooker Chemical Company (now OxyChem), which needed land on which to disposing its waste products. By the early 1950s the pit had reached its capacity. An estimated 21,000 tons of chemical waste, stored in metal and fibre barrels had been placed in the former canal. The dumpsite was then filled in and capped off. Shortly after, the land was deeded to the Niagara Falls School Board for one dollar.

Urgently needing space for a new facility, the school board constructed a school on 99th Street, on top of the landfill, despite disclaimers in the contract that warned of the presence of buried chemicals. The city continued to grow as people moved into the new single family and low-income houses built on both sides of the former canal. Most were unaware of the site's history.

*Everybody's coming to town,
Those left we all do pity,
For we'll have a jolly time
At Love's new Model City.*

LASALLE DEVELOPMENT

LOVE CANAL

(DEMOLISHED)

During the mid-1950s and early 60s, a residential neighbourhood was built at the eastern extent of Niagara Falls, New York, adjacent to a retired chemical waste landfill. Love Canal was widely touted as a model for progressive urban planning. A dream community.



PLATE 82

As early as the mid-1960s the residents began noticing faint irritating odors, as well as unknown substances leaching out of the ground forming puddles.



PLATE 83

Increasingly, Love Canal residents reported having health problems. Members of the community, led by a young mother, Lois Gibbs, joined together to form a homeowners association to investigate the extraordinarily occurrences of cancer, chemical burns, nervous disorders, miscarriages, and birth defects. They believed the cause was coming from the air, soil, and water. Complaints made to authorities, however, seemed only to fall on deaf ears. "There is no problem here," the mayor was quoted saying.



PLATE 84

On August 2nd, 1978, after a night of a heavy rain, everything changed. Compelled by pressure from a swollen water table, buried metal drums containing unknown materials were pushed up to the surface. Many of the 55-gallon containers were damaged and leaking out liquid chemicals, creating small streams on the ground. An emergency evacuation was ordered for pregnant women and young children who lived in the immediate vicinity.



PLATE 85

"I visited the canal area at that time. Corroding waste-disposal drums could be seen breaking up through the grounds of backyards. Trees and gardens were turning black and dying. One entire swimming pool had been popped up from its foundation, afloat now on a small sea of chemicals. Puddles of noxious substances were pointed out to me by the residents. Some of these puddles were in their yards, some were in their basements, others yet were on the school grounds. Everywhere the air had a faint, choking smell. Children returned from play with burns on their hands and faces."

- Eckardt C. Beck, Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2.



PLATE 86

*Five days after the emergency evacuation, President Carter declared the Love Canal neighbourhood a **Federal Disaster Area**, the first ever time the designation was used for a human-made event. More than two hundred families were relocated to temporary shelters.*

Environmental tests revealed the presence of 421 different chemical compounds; many of them were known human carcinogens. Over the next two years, hundreds more families living in the effected zone were asked to relocate. The 99th Street School, built directly on top of the landfill, was permanently closed, while the vacated houses were purchased by the government and boarded up.



PLATE 87

In the intensive report on the disaster, Dr. Robert Whalen, New York State Health Commissioner, concluded thus:

"The profound and devastating effects of the Love Canal tragedy, in terms of human health and suffering and environmental damage, cannot and probably will never be fully measured...[w]e cannot undo the damage that has been wrought at Love Canal but we can take appropriate preventive measures so that we are better able to anticipate and hopefully prevent future events of this kind."



PLATE 88

As part of the federal Superfund program, the Environmental Protection Agency was awarded enough money to construct a slurry wall to contain the ground water and to reburial the most toxic area with a plastic liner and new cap of clay and dirt. Today, a perimeter fence which encloses the site is the only distinguishing feature of William T. Love's unfinished canal.



PLATE 89



FIG 20.1 DEBRIS ON BUFFALO AVENUE

EXTANT HOUSES
LOVE CANAL

Love Canal is a ghost neighbourhood today. Although the majority of residents eventually moved away, and ninety percent of the houses were torn down, a few of the original homeowners decided they would stay.



PLATE 90
790, 100TH STREET



PLATE 91
619, 102ND STREET



PLATE 92
505, 100TH STREET



PLATE 93
498, 100TH STREET



PLATE 94
437, 100TH STREET



PLATE 95
682, 102ND STREET



PLATE 96
468, 101ST STREET



PLATE 97
TRANSFORMER HOUSE

GUESTBOOK

Robert Cavelier (La Salle), 1669

I leave you to imagine if it is not a beautiful cascade, to see all the water in this great river, which at its mouth is three leagues in width, precipitate itself from a height of two hundred feet with a roar that is heard not only from the place we were, ten or twelve leagues distant, but actually from the other side of Lake Ontario, opposite its mouth.... (McGreevy 24)

Louis Hennepin

A New Discovery of a Large Country in America, 1698

The Waters which fall from this vast height, do foam and boil after the most hideous manner imaginable, making an outrageous Noise, more terrible than that of Thunder; for when the Wind blows from off the South, their dismal roaring may be heard above fifteen Leagues off.
(Hennepin 54-55)

Chateaubriand, 1791

It is formed by the Niagara River which springs from Lake Erie and empties into Lake Ontario. At about nine miles from the latter lake are the falls; their vertical height may be some two hundred feet. But what helps to make them so violent is that, from Lake Erie all the way to the cataract, the river flows steadily downward along a steep incline, a distance of almost six leagues, with the result that at the very edge of the cascade it is less a river than an impetuous sea whose hundred thousand torrents rush toward the gaping mouth of the chasm. (Butor 5)

Thomas Moore, 1804

I felt as if approaching the very residence of the Deity; the tears started into my eyes; and I remained, for moments after we had lost sight of the scene, in that delicious absorption which pious enthusiasm alone can produce.... We must have new combinations of language to describe the Falls of Niagara. (Greenhill 4)

Thomas Cole, 1829

And Niagara! that wonder of the world!—where the sublime and beautiful are bound together in an indissoluble chain. In gazing on it we feel as though a great void had been filled in our minds—our conceptions expand—we become a part of what we behold! At our feet the floods of a thousand rivers are poured out—the contents of vast inland seas. In its volume we conceive immensity; in its course, everlasting duration; in its impetuosity, uncontrollable power. These are the elements of its sublimity. Its beauty is garlanded around in the varied hues of the water, in the spray that ascends the sky, and in that unrivalled bow which forms a complete cincture round the unresting floods.
(McKinsey 211-12)

Alexis de Tocqueville, 1831

If you wish to see this place in its grandeur, hasten. If you delay, your Niagara will have been spoiled for you. Already the forest round about is being cleared. The Romans are putting steeples on the Pantheon. I don't give the Americans ten years to establish a saw or flour mill at the base of the Cataract. (McKinsey 155)

Frances Trollope, 1832

Now, the neighbourhood of this great wonder is overrun with every species of abominable fungus—the growth of rank bad taste: with equal luxuriance on the English and American sides, Chinese pagoda, menagerie, camera obscura, museum, watchtower, wooden monument, teagardens, 'old curiosity shops.' (McKinsey 154)

Harriet Beecher Stowe, 1834

I felt as if I could have gone over with the waters; it would be so beautiful a death; there would be no fear in it, I felt the rock tremble with a sort of joy. I was so maddened that I could have gone too, if it had gone. (McGreevy 47)

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *My Visit to Niagara*, 1835

Gradually, and after much contemplation, I came to know, by my own feelings, that Niagara is indeed a wonder of the world, and not less wonderful, because time and thought must be employed in comprehending it. ...Night after night, I dreamed of it, and was gladdened every morning by the consciousness of a growing capacity to enjoy it. Yet I will not pretend to the all-absorbing enthusiasm of some more fortunate spectators, nor deny, that very trifling causes would draw my eyes and thoughts from the cataract. (Hawthorne 247)

Anna Jameson, 1838

the Falls looked magnificently mysterious, part glancing silver light, and part dark shadow, mingled with fleecy folds of spray, over which floated a soft, sleepy gleam; and in the midst of this tremendous velocity of motion and eternity of sound, there was deep, deep repose, as in a dream. It impressed me for the time like something supernatural—a vision, not a reality. (Revie 89)

Charles Dickens, *American Notes*, 1842

...when I felt how near to my Creator I was standing, the first effect, and the enduring one—instant and lasting—of the tremendous spectacle was Peace. Peace of Mind, tranquility, calm recollections of the Dead, great thoughts of Eternal Rest and Happiness; nothing of gloom or terror. Niagara was at once stamped upon my heart, an Image of Beauty; to remain there, changeless and indelible, until its pulses cease to beat, for ever. (Berton 1992: 73-74)

Margaret Fuller, 1843

I realized the identity of that mood of nature in which these waters were poured down with such absorbing force, with that in which the Indian was shaped on the same soil. For continually upon my mind came, unsought and unwelcome, images, such as never haunted it before, of naked savages stealing behind me with uplifted tomahawks; again and again this illusion recurred, and even after I had thought it over, and tried to shake it off, I could not help starting and looking behind me. (Revie 96)

Anonymous Visitors, *Table Rock Album*, c.1845

What mind is not enlarged, what soul not filled with ennobling emotions, by the contemplation of such wonders? Let man behold with awe and admiration, and learn. (Nye 1994: 21)

It is only some water running over some rocks—that's all. (Nye 1994. 21)

It is just the spot for washing sheep. (Tiplin 153)

Abraham Lincoln, 1848

The thing that struck me most forcibly when I saw the falls was where in the world did all that water come from? (Berton 1993. 20)

Fredrika Bremer, 1850

...the water here has the most delightful freshness, that I can compare to nothing with which I am acquainted. But it feels to me like a spirit of a delicious, immortal youth. Yes, here it seems to me as if one might become young again in body and in soul. (McGreevy 81)

George William Curtis, 1852

Looking over into the abyss, we behold nothing below, we hear only a slow, constant thunder; and, bewildered in the mist, dream that the Cataract has cloven the earth to its centre, and that, pouring its waters into the fervent inner heat, they hiss into spray, and overhang the fated Fall, the sweat of its agony. (McGreevy 55)

Frederic Edwin Church, 1856

I observe the courses of the river and all the glories offered to my view. I lose myself in unbounded space. I am nothing. God is everywhere. (Grant 69-70)

Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, 1856

Every place that is sacred is invaded by a glaring hotel, an apple stand, a paper mill, or Lady-book and Hiawatha Indians. ...Turn which way you will at Niagara, you find...the money changers are indeed profaning the great temple. (McKinsey 133)

London Times, 1860

In an instant the whole mass of water, glowing vivid, and as if incandescent in the intense light, seemed turned to molten silver. From behind the Fall the light shone with such dazzling brilliancy that the waters immediately before it looked like a sheet of crystal glass, a cascade of diamonds, every bead and stream in which leapt and sparkled and spread the glare over the whole scene, like a river of lighted phosphorous. (McKinsey 261)

Anthony Trollope, 1862

You will fall as the bright waters fall, rushing down into your new world with no hesitation and with no dismay; and you will rise again as the spray rises bright, beautiful, and pure. Then you will flow away in your course to the uncompassed, distant, and eternal ocean. (Revie 103)

Henry James, 1871

I may say, in parenthesis, that the importunities one suffers here, amid the central din of the

cataract, from hackmen and photographers and vendors of gimcracks, are simply hideous and infamous. The road is lined with little drinking-shops and warehouses, and from these retreats their occupants dart forth upon the hapless traveller with their competitive attractions. You purchase release at last by the fury of your indifference, and stand there gazing your fill at the most beautiful object in the world. (James 90-91)

Mark Twain, 1871

I never was so scared before and survived it. But we got through at last, and emerged into the open day, where we could stand in front of the laced and frothy and seething world of descending water, and look at it. When I saw how much of it there was, and how fearfully in earnest it was, I was sorry I had gone behind it. <http://www.niagarafallslive.com/Mark_Twains_account_of_Niagara_Falls.htm>

Walt Whitman, 1880

We were very slowly crossing the Suspension bridge—not a full stop anywhere, but next to it—the day clear, sunny, still—and I out on the platform. The falls were in plain view about a mile off, but very distinct, and no roar—hardly a murmur. The river tumbling green and white, far below me; the dark high banks, the plentiful umbrage, many bronze cedars, in shadow; and tempering and arching all the immense materiality, a clear sky overhead, with a few with clouds, limpid, spiritual, silent. Brief, and as quiet as brief, that picture—a remembrance always afterwards. (McKinsey 273)

The New York Times, *Tales About "The Falls,"* July 29, 1883

There is no telling how many crimes are hidden in this deadly river.

Oscar Wilde, 1883

When I first saw the falls I was disappointed in the outline. Every American bride is taken there, and the sight of the stupendous waterfall must be one of the earliest, if not the keenest, disappointments in American married life. (McKinsey 178)

Frederick Law Olmsted, 1887

Not park, nor pleasure garden, but "Reservation" is the name affixed by the Legislature to the property now happily recovered to the people. It is a spot reserved, and sacred to what divine power has already put there, rather than a proper field for the display of human ingenuity or art. (McGreevy 115)

King Camp Gillette, *The Human Drift*, 1894

...for the power thus secured and brought under control for public use would, in the long run, result in an enormous saving of labor over any other possible means of obtaining like power. Converted into the electric current, it would drive all the machinery of production, and in the form of light convert "Metropolis" into a fairyland. <<http://www.library.cornell.edu/Reps/DOCS/gillette.htm>>

Annie Edson Taylor, 1901

I felt as though all Nature was being annihilated (Berton 1992. 268)

Jules Verne, *The Master of the World*, 1904

The sun had set, and through the twilight the moon's rays shone upon us from the south. The speed of our craft, doubled by the speed of the current, was prodigious! In another moment, we should plunge into that black hollow which forms the very center of the Canadian Falls. (Verne 96)

H.G. Wells, 1906

The real interest of Niagara for me was not in the waterfall, but in the human accumulations about it. They stood for the future, threats and promises, and the waterfall was just a vast reiteration of falling water. The note of growth in human accomplishment rose clear and triumphant above the elemental thunder. (Berton 1993. 22)

Charles Burchfield, 1947

Niagara Falls about sun-down. Stop to view American Falls, and also Horse-Shoe. The latter for me are the most impressive—the sun lighting just the brink of the falls, a beautiful fragment of rainbow; the color of the crater ran a whole gamut of infinite tones from rich yellow olive in the middle, (where it was sunlit) to cool bluegreens close at hand in shadow. We were struck with the slowness of the water as it poured over (probably only apparently so). It seemed almost like a slow motion movie. Great clouds of pure white mist. B said very aptly that the “boiling” water at the foot of the falls was like maple sap boiling. (Burchfield 281)

Marilyn Monroe, 1952

The falls produce a lot of electricity, but the honeymooners don't use very much of it at night. (Berton 1993. 23)

Isaac Asimov, *In Joy Still Felt*, 1979

I rather lost my breath, for the Horseshoe Falls are extraordinarily beautiful.
<<http://www.friendsofmerrill.org/solo3.html>>

Tom Robbins, *Still Life with Woodpecker*, 1980

The Grand Canyon and Niagara Falls have been looked at so much that they've become effete, sucked empty by too many stupid eyes. What is there to minister to the silent zones of man as an individual? How about a cold chicken bone on a paper plate at midnight, how about a lurid lipstick lengthening or shortening at your command, how about...
<<http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/show/19863>>

Tom Marshall, *Voices on the Brink*, 1988

By day they seek out the rainbow, by night the artificial, garish coloured lights projected on the falls. This is pure Hollywood even without [Marilyn] Monroe. A stimulus to “love,” whether in a cave, a car, or a pink motel. This is a city of cut-rate dreams. A tawdry slut made up to take advantage of the glamorous kindness of twilight. (Waterloo Journal of Architecture. Shields, 43)

Jane Urquhart, *The Whirlpool*, 1992

Very rarely, but now and then, a perfect corpse came down the river to the whirlpool. With all the

unreliability of chance it slid around murderous rocks and avoided currents destined for sharp branches. As if it knew the river well and could navigate its currents. (Urquhart 183)

Douglas Coupland, *All Families Are Psychotic*, 2001

Where did the past six minutes go? When time is used up, does it go to some kind of place like a junkyard? Or down a river like the waters beneath Niagara Falls? Does time evaporate and turn into rain and start all over again? (Coupland)

Christopher Dewdney, *The Natural History*, 2002

The portentous rumbling of far storms. Limestone corridors inside stone libraries dream the hot, grey rainless days of August. The Niagara opens before us in an opulent Fragonard brain-coral, spotted with sun. (Dewdney 3)

Joyce Carol Oates, *The Falls*, 2004

Yet The Falls exerted its malevolent spell, that never weakened...Most Niagara natives kept their distance from The Falls, so they were immune. But if you drifted too near, even out of intellectual curiosity, you were in danger; beginning to think thoughts unnatural to your personality as if the thunderous waters were thinking for you, depriving you of your will. (Oates)

Alec Soth, 2006

I went to Niagara for the same reason as the honeymooners and suicide jumpers. The relentless thunder of the Falls just calls for big passion.
<<http://inmotion.magnumphotos.com/essay/niagara>>

Anonymous Travel Blog Comments

November 8, 2005

I honestly didn't expect the area to be so false and once we got over the initial shock we managed to find a suitably tacky, but comfortable, motel room for the night. ...The park offered a nice contrast to the built-up area we had just left, especially with the crashing noise of the falls in the distance.
<<http://www.travelpod.com/travel-blog-entries/byrnedm/meandering2005/1131207660/tpod.html>>

November 7, 2007

They have commercialized Niagara Falls to a point I think it hurts them. It has its beautiful parts and the people are friendly enough though. Not a whole lot to do other than the falls and things that have to do with them.

June 1, 2008

Lots of water for sure! I can't argue with that. It's just we were a bit underwhelmed. Give us the majestic West. <<http://travel.aol.com/travel-guide/Niagara+Falls-New+York-United+States:586-destination-review-all>>

LEAVING NIAGARA FALLS

In the story of Orpheus, the hero makes a journey to the underworld to retrieve something that was lost. Along the way he encounters unimaginable monsters and figures who guard the secrets of the nether regions. Orpheus placates them by playing on his lyre while singing with a voice so beautiful it was said trees would bend down to listen. With his music, he persuades the ruler of the underworld, Hades, to release his beloved Eurydice, who had died of a snake bite. The one condition given him was that he mustn't look at her before they reached the surface. As the story goes, while retracing his path, the hero commits a fateful error. At the moment before they step into the light of day, he forgets about his promise, and—but for a second—glances over his shoulder. He watches helpless as Eurydice slips away into the darkness, losing her for the last time.

This project began with the feeling that something was missing. There was a vague suspicion that the familiar imagery of the Falls was a kind of front; that behind all the flagrant artifice there lay another dimension of Niagara kept concealed from normal view. An unplumbed depth. There was a desire to seek out this absent dimension, wherever it might be found, and coax it out into the light. Perhaps not unlike the fate of Orpheus, the retrieval of the lost object (a tarnished aura?) and the prospect of its rebirth, is a foregone conclusion. The goal, it seems now, whether noble or foolish, was in fact beyond reach from the start. Its meaning, however, and ultimate source of richness, arises out of the enactment of the 'night journey' itself, in its conscious striving after. So if the desired object was, in a sense, always already lost, maybe it was also beside the point.

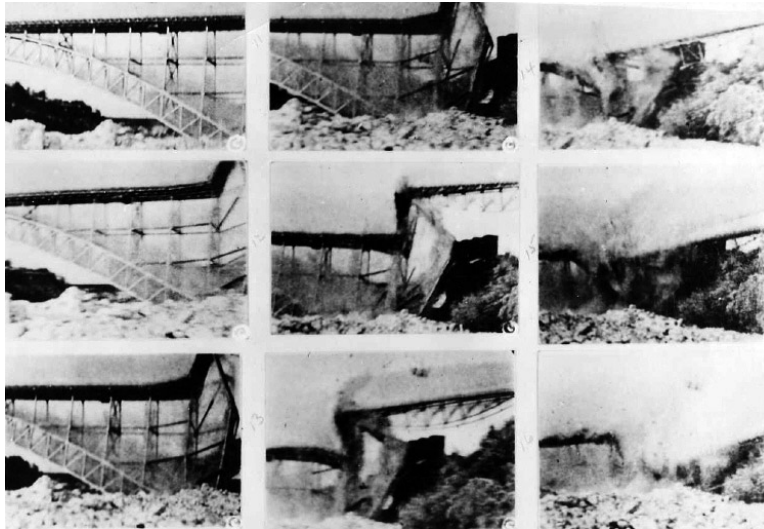


FIG 23.1 COLLAPSE SEQUENCE OF THE FALLSVIEW, HONEYMOON AND UPPER STEEL ARCH BRIDGE,
JANUARY 27, 1938

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